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THE FONDREN LECTURES FOR 1930

THE MIRACLE OF THE GALILEAN

BY

PAUL B. KERN

THE FONDREN LECTURES

Mr. and Mrs. W. W. Fondren, members of St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Houston, Tex., gave to Southern Methodist University on May 10, 1910, a fund, the proceeds from which were to be used in the establishment of the Fondren Lectures on Christian Missions. The following paragraph from the conditions of the original gift will set forth the spirit and purpose of the Foundation:

> The interest on the investment shall be used annually in procuring some competent person to deliver lectures on Christian Missions under the auspices of Southern Methodist University. This fund is dedicated to the foundation of a Lectureship on Christian Missions in consideration of other donations made for the upbuilding of Southern Methodist University, and especially the School of Theology thereof, and in the hope that something of good may come directly therefrom and that others more able to give largely may be inspired to devote some portion of their means which they hold in trust as stewards of the Lord to the increase of said fund or to some other laudable enterprise of our Church.

THE MIRACLE
OF THE
GALILEAN

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THE FONDREN LECTURES
For 1930
Delivered before Southern Methodist University

BY
PAUL B. KERN

PASTOR OF THE TRAVIS PARK METHODIST
EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH, IN
SAN ANTONIO

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Dedication

TO MY FATHER

J. A. K.

WHO LIVED BEFORE ME
THE MIRACLE OF A HOLY LIFE

FOREWORD

THE justification for this effort to interpret the significance of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ must confessedly rest not in any popular demand but rather in the inward urge for expression that persists in a normal preacher's heart. It is my firm conviction that we are upon the verge of a renaissance of spiritual life in America that shall go far toward saving us from the impending disasters of a machine-driven civilization. If we are to understand and control for higher aims the powers now coming so rapidly to birth in our age, we must learn again the secret of Jesus. He has Humanity's last word.

Into the field of critical scholarship I have not undertaken to go. This is due not alone to the fact that I am aware of my limitations in these technical fields, but more emphatically to the fact that my purpose has been evangelically constructive rather than technically critical. This volume at least has the merit of coming out of the warm heart of a pastor who believes in the adequacy of the gospel of Jesus to meet all the needs of the human heart in this and every age. I have made use of the material of the Scriptures in the same manner in which a modern preacher uses the Bible Sunday after Sunday to bring home a truth to his listeners. I am in thorough sympathy with the modern, historical study of the Bible, but I have not cumbered my pages with critical details which would serve only to divert the mind of the reader from the main issues presented. In Scripture quotations I have made almost exclusive use of the American Revised Version, except in those cases where the footnote indicates that I have used the translation of Dr. Moffatt (copyright by Richard R. Smith, Inc.). To the publishers of these versions and other literary sources from which I have quoted, I am deeply indebted.

I wish to record my appreciation of the courtesies shown me by the faculty of Southern Methodist University whose gracious invitation to deliver the Fondren Lectures and whose uniform kindness at the time of their delivery made the experience a real joy. That institution, with whose early years I was so intimately connected, grows in my esteem and hope as each successive year gives evidence of its increasing power for good.

P. B. K.

April 14, 1930.

CONTENTS

PAGE

I. THE MIRACLE IN PERSONALITY: FROM JESUS TO CHRIST 13

II. THE MIRACLE IN REVELATION: HISTORY, NATURE, AND GRACE 43

III. THE MIRACLE IN THE MIND: THE CONQUEST OF SUPERSTITION 73

IV. THE MIRACLE IN THE SPIRIT: FEAR TURNED TO JOY 105

V. THE MIRACLE IN REDEMPTION: THE DYNAMIC OF LOVE 137

VI. THE MIRACLE IN ETHICS: THE OLD AND THE NEW MORALITY 167

VII. THE MIRACLE IN ETERNITY: THE POWER OF AN ENDLESS LIFE 203

VIII. THE UNFINISHED MIRACLE: TAKING JESUS SERIOUSLY 235

CHAPTER I

THE MIRACLE IN PERSONALITY: FROM JESUS TO CHRIST

CHAPTER I

THE MIRACLE IN PERSONALITY: FROM JESUS TO CHRIST

I

Two thousand years ago in a little country nestling on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea the most important single event in recorded time occurred. It was in the land of Palestine, which had been the stage of many world conflicts and crises. Along the beaten trails of her arterial highways the armies of the ancient world had tramped in both victory and defeat. The fertile soil of her plains and valleys had been drenched with the blood of contending empires, and now, after prophets had warned and poets had sung and petty kings risen and fallen, the vast majority of the people of the land were pursuing the even tenor of their way, indifferent to other than purely material interests. Their ancient glory was now dust and ashes. Rome was their master in politics and Greece was their mistress in culture. All that was left for them was the remnant of a Hope, which, having been long deferred, had made the nation's heart sick. The religious leaders had strayed into the barren desert of legalism and the voice of the prophet had been stifled by the dust of tradition. It was the zero hour of Israel's night.

And then the light of a new day broke upon them. The glory of God shone down upon the little town of Bethlehem and the power of the Most High overshadowed the Virgin Mary. Amid the rustic surroundings of a village stable the betrothed of Joseph and the Anointed of the Lord gave birth to her child and laid him in a manger. The outside world moved placidly on and paid but little heed to this seemingly commonplace and insignificant event. But heaven is always breaking in upon our world and it may be we are nearer to the center of spiritual reality and life than we have dreamed. At all events something happened at the birth of this child that has never happened before or since. Why try to describe it when the language of the Gospel portrays it with the chastened beauty of perfect literary art? Let us hear the words of Luke as though they had never fallen upon our ears before:

> And there were shepherds in the same country abiding in the field, keeping watch by night over their flock. And an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people: *for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.* And this is the sign unto you: Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

> Glory to God in the highest,
> And on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased.
>
> And it came to pass, when the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing that is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. *And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.*[1]

These are words of lyric beauty. They captivate our imagination and charm our reverent thought. With but little lift of soul we are ourselves transported back over the centuries and the leagues of distance and stand in rapt adoration on the Judean hillside. We hear the angelic spokesman and listen to the swelling notes of the chorus of angel voices breaking like a crescendo of glory from the dome of the night. It is all very beautiful, but is it really true? *Did it actually happen?* Was Jesus, who is called Christ, really born in the land of Judah and the city of Bethlehem in the time of Tiberius Cæsar? The scene that is depicted in the Gospel of Luke might well have sprung from a religious imagination. If God were to break into our humanity, ordinary reason would suggest some such divine portents and spectacular accompaniments as are indicated in the Gospel story. The critic may question the historicity of the supernatural events connected with the central happening. The skeptic may, with a fair show of reason, say that this whole episode arose out of the overstrained minds of a group of disappointed Galilean fishermen left stranded on the shores of their own generation and driven to search for some adequate explanation of the magnificent illusion to which they had given their youth. This may explain some, but does it explain all the facts in the case? Does not the explanation itself call for a further explanation? We do not seem to be able in our day to escape from the piercing directness of this question. It seems that in spite of all our modern knowledge and down-to-date sophistication we may need to face again and review to a satisfactory conclusion the data of the Incarnation. We may need to go back to Bethlehem, to the cradle of our Lord and of our faith, and stand by a manger and look into the face of a Child that bears a heavenly image and like the shepherds wonder, and like the wise men worship, and like Simeon cry out: "Mine eyes have seen thy salvation which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples."

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[1] Luke 2: 8-16.

When we turn for the answer to our question to the record in the New Testament we find that our material is fragmentary but convincing. There existed no lingering doubt in the minds of his intimate friends and fellow laborers as to who he was. They believed that he was God. They believed this not so much as an intellectual proposition but as an inwardly irresistible conviction. Where reason might stumble, faith walked with sure and unhesitating tread. Flesh and blood had not revealed it unto them, but their spirits had risen up to verify a self-authenticating Voice within that told them that when they beheld him they beheld the image of the Father. It is interesting to study this faith in Jesus as a divine revelation of God, and see how it grows into a radiant certainty, resting not only upon a fact of history, but upon the deeper foundation of experience.

When first they met him by the Sea of Galilee they said, "We have found the Messiah." To them this Promised One was the divine answer to the longings of prophetic souls long dead and the guarantee of political liberties and spiritual joys that could come only when God should lay bare his arm once more in behalf of his people. It never occurred to them that the Messiah could be a mere man. And when Andrew bore the glad news to his brother, it was indeed "the good news." But their early faith was to be tried in the crucible of experience. They left their homes and followed him who had no home; they gave up their families to belong to the family of God. They walked with him, they talked with him, they slept with him, they ate with him. They heard him speak to the multitude and also to a lonely, sinful woman. They knew him under the restraints of a crowd and in the freedom and intimacy of his own little inner circle. They watched him when clamorous multitudes would have taken him and made him King, and they saw his drawn and aching soul when all the people "went away and walked no more with him." They stood by while his spirit trembled in Gethsemane and, benumbed and dismayed, they followed him to the foot of his cross on Golgotha. They drank together from a single cup of life and their feet walked in the same tracks that led from the springtime of Capernaum to the winter night of Jerusalem. And when they faced the final test of their faith there is one word that leaps to their lips, "Thou art the Christ, *the Son of the living God.*"

And this faith endured. It passed from lip to lip and from life to life. The shock of his death did not unbalance it and the certainty of his resurrection only served to authenticate it in their minds. Sometimes it happens in human life that, under the spell of the presence of a magnetic personality, reasoned judgment waits on the ardent passion of the soul, and love is blind to any fact that disturbs the ecstasy of its devotion. The going away of Jesus, however, served only to deepen their faith in him as a unique, flesh-and-blood revelation of the eternal God. Let us trace that growing and glowing conviction upon the part of the men of his own generation. We shall call to witness the three outstanding leaders in the apostolic age.

The testimony of Peter before the crucifixion had been clear and decisive. His weakness at the last hour was a breakdown of the flesh and not a final apostasy of soul. And now the apostle is confronted with a jeering and incredulous mob ready upon an accidental urge to repeat the bloody tragedy of the cross. What will his testimony be under these circumstances? There is no cause to wonder long. "Let all the house of

Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified." Not only so, but in his name and by his power men's sins can be forgiven. The burden that had so long rested on the weary shoulders of the world could and would be lifted by this "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you." Before him they were to repent and in his name they were to be baptized unto "the remission of sins." On the next day, being challenged by the authorities, Peter gives it as his outspoken judgment that the miracle of healing that had occurred had been made possible by the power of this Jesus of Nazareth and he boldly climaxed his defense with these astounding words: "And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved." The same confidence shines brightly to the last of the apostle's life. Faith and fact were one and not disparate, and the contention that Jesus was not only the child of Mary, but also the child of God, and that the whole enterprise which was even then beginning to turn the world upside down rested upon an observable, verifiable, and indisputable fact, was boldly declared. There is some of the old Petrine fire in his insistence that "we did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty."

Faith had a harder road to travel to capture the mind of Paul. The ruthless logic of a dialectically trained intellect yielded more slowly to the impact of this fact of Jesus. He resisted it until one day on the Damascus road he was arrested by a heavenly voice to face the inescapable Christ. From thence on he was a willing captive to the captain of his salvation. It is interesting to study how this first-hand contact with the living and risen Christ supplied Paul with the key to his whole philosophy of history and theology. All his thinking becomes from henceforth Christocentric. In Christ are hidden "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." He is the author of creation, "the image of the invisible God; . . . in him were all things created; . . . and in him all things hold together."

It is in the Epistle to the Romans that Paul sets forth most fully and clearly his ideas concerning the place of Christ in human history. After depicting the universal need of salvation because of the fact that all humanity, both Gentile and Jew, lay under conviction of sin and after showing the futility of legalism and formal righteousness, he exclaims as though it were a blast upon the heavenly trumpets: *"But now* apart from the law a righteousness of God hath been manifested!" Unquestionably the translators should have placed an exclamation point after that clause in the twenty-first verse of the third chapter of Romans. Paul is saying that a new era has dawned. The old futilities of the law are energized by the new dynamic of faith in Christ. Something has happened in his world that has changed the whole structure of life. Jesus has been born. God has been manifested. The Father has sent forth his Son, born of a woman, to be the propitiation for our sins. Life can never be the same again. The gateways of salvation can never again be padlocked by Pharisaism. Satan and sin and the powers of darkness shall no more rule the world, but God has at last in the fullness of time ushered in the day of the Lord in which salvation is near to every one that believes and the righteous are "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." One understands now why Martin Luther wrote opposite this passage on the margin of his Bible, "This is the chief point and the very central plan of the Epistle and of the whole Bible." This far-reaching faith of the apostle to the Gentiles rests at last upon the credibility of an exact, datable event in human history. If Paul is wrong, the Church has lost its way. If Paul is juggling theories and spinning fanciful philosophies, and it does not matter about Christ any more and he is not the living center of everything, then history has no meaning worth the discovery and life has no goal worth the struggle. "There must be a real explanation of a thing so signal in a rational universe."

It seems hardly necessary to add the testimony of the third witness. Without involving the critical question of the authorship of the fourth Gospel we may yet hear the testimony of one who, if not John, was a greater than John. "And the Word came in the flesh and lived for a time [literally, *had his tent*] in our midst, so that we saw His glory—the glory of the Father's only Son, sent from His presence." (John 1: 14, Weymouth translation.) As in the case of Peter and Paul, this man's faith stands the shock of years. Just as the light of the first century was fading and the last living witness of this Immemorial Fact was entering into glory, the seer on Patmos writes to his children in the gospel: "That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life; . . . that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you." At the end of the first century the fact of Bethlehem had lost none of its uniqueness and appeal.

II

At this point we may well pause to consider a question that seems inevitable to our modern mind. It is the question that arises as to the validity of our evidence for this world-transforming event. Is the record credible and is its testimony sufficiently conclusive to serve as the basis of a philosophy that has Christ as its center? In other words, are we merely arguing in a circle when we use the Bible to prove a truth of the Bible?

Let it be said in the beginning that the testimony of the Scripture is mightily reënforced by the witness of the Christian centuries. Jesus is a part of the last nineteen hundred years and any effort to think of them without thinking in terms of his person and message would be as futile as the effort to disentangle the literary memoirs of his life from the literature of the English-speaking world. Once a year the Christian world, the world that most of us know, pauses in its mad rush for gain and learns to share with others as the Christmastide, in the name of him who was born in Bethlehem, spreads its mantle of charity and brotherly love over the selfish shoulders of our acquisitive society. Never a Sabbath passes but that in places without number humble men and women break bread and partake together of the cup in honor of him who said, "Do this in remembrance of me." Jesus has built an empire more solid and lasting and infinitely more compact than the proudest empires of the world. We must have a care that in treating lightly the historicity of the Christian tradition we do not, to use a German figure, "throw the child out with the bath." Jesus is greater than any word about him and we shall test the ancient record in the light of his eternal soul and not his soul in the light of the record.

Furthermore, the New Testament does not depend for its power over the Christian mind upon its freedom from criticism and scientific study. To reverent scholarship Christianity has always willingly submitted its literary data. We are all aware of the fact that the final validity of the Christian tradition rests not upon the accuracy of some rabbinical scribe, but upon the answer to the question as to whether God spoke and still speaks in Jesus Christ. Archæology, historical criticism, scientific investigation have all been busy in these latter years scrutinizing the gospels and letters of the first century of the Christian era. The keenest minds of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, urged on by an impersonal passion for truth or by a subtle, if unconscious, desire to explain a spiritual phenomenon which they hesitate to accept as a mandate of conduct, have left no manuscript unstudied or a single iota subscript unscrutinized to satisfy themselves that this Christian tradition embodied in the New Testament is authentic and trustworthy. The result has been that the Bible in its main aspects remains unharmed. Higher criticism has left us an unimpeachable residuum of historic fact; the spade and the shovel have reset the stage of the ancient drama and even the friends in the household of faith, who in their misguided zeal have insisted upon a verbal infallibility which the Bible nowhere claims for itself, even these have been unable to discredit the historicity and dependableness of the literary records of the birth, life, and death of Jesus of Nazareth.

III

It may seem to some of my readers that I have gone far afield in retracing before you the story of the birth of Jesus and reviewing the calm confidence with which the early Christians attributed to this event the significance of a revolutionary world-upsetting fact. But Jesus was either born or he was not born; he either had or did not have a unique consciousness of God; he is either simply a dead Galilean peasant or he is the ageless master of our searching spirits. Here is Humanity's final, unyielding Dilemma. And on the categorical answer to these alternatives depends the future of our world and the fate of our own individual souls. Dr. Glover puts this forcibly when he says: "There is no figure in human history that signifies more. If he was only what some say, he ought to be a mere figure of antiquity by now. But he is more than that; Jesus is not a dead issue; he has to be reckoned with still, and men, who are to treat mankind seriously, must make the intellectual effort to understand the man on whom has been centered more of the interest and the passion of the most serious and the best of mankind than upon any other."[2]

These considerations are doubly important because our modern man is having peculiar and trying religious difficulties. With the loss of a historic sense in any proper meaning of the word he finds himself floundering in a sea of contemporaneity with no log for his voyage and no port into which he may put when buffeted by the adverse winds of this strange world. He is natively and intuitively religious, but he is so busy trying the spirits that he can find no comfort for his bewildered soul. He will not quite trust his honest heart to the religious puritanism of his father, or even to the temperamental emotionalism of his revered mother, and yet he can find no sure answer in the literature or life of his generation for the wistful yearning of his own spirit.

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[2] T. R. Glover, "The Jesus of History," p. 5. Doubleday, Doran and Company.

Men are attempting to-day to build a faith upon psychology rather than upon history, upon current philosophy rather than upon Christian revelation. In this process the Gospels are not so much untrue as they are irrelevant and Jesus is not so much denied as forgotten. Why go back, they say, to Palestine nineteen hundred years ago to find a faith when we have all the laboratories of physical, psychical, and social experimentation at our command in the twentieth century? The study of the evolutionary process going on in the world has tended to give us an intellectual disdain for our past, a kind of snobbish pity for the belated ancestors who helped to dig us out of the pit whence we were digged. We are prone to forget that unless we watch our cosmic step we may become the shame of our forefathers rather than the pride of our grandchildren.

The modern man or woman is not irreligious. We have churches and philanthropies and pet missions to the unfortunate and all the machinery of an elaborate religiosity which spends millions of dollars on its overhead and in one form or another succeeds in persuading a large group of respectable people that they belong to the elect of God. Our pantheon is not empty. It has many gods. We will not be so exclusive and bigoted as to have only one god. There is room for the god of Beauty, the god of Progress, the god of Self-Expression, the god of Success. "Ours is an age of new-rich people, crass, crude, well-washed, all dressed up, sure that certain easily perceived goods will make life full and satisfying, and ready to pay heavily for their attainment. It is unintelligent to call such an age godless. A god is a way of talking about a good. The man in the street and his wife may not propitiate their gods adequately in words; but they sacrifice to them their lives and their children. For what more can any gods ask?"[3] This same trenchant author goes on to say that "the twentieth century seems to be sacrificing itself to goods and appetite and comfort and conceit." No such age can understand Jesus. The gospel story sounds like a myth to men and women who are in love with the world, the flesh, and the devil. "Whatever else Jesus may mean, in historical religion he is at any rate the antithesis of all our day deems of most worth. He is poor when we would be rich. He seems to regard chastity as normal and healthy. To him comfort matters little one way or the other. He is the incarnation of humility. It can hardly be expected that he should be the chosen God of an adolescent civilization intent upon the hungry search for superficiality."[4] Surrounded by this baffling deluge of things and forced to pay homage to the gods of to-day if he is to keep a footing in the competitive world in which he lives, one has more sympathy than censure when he finds upon the lips of our befuddled modernist the lines of Palgrave:

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[3] Bernard Iddings Bell, "Beyond Agnosticism," p. 12. Harper and Brothers.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 18, 19.

> "Dim tracts of time divide
> Those golden days from me;
> Thy voice comes strange o'er years of change;
> How *can* I follow Thee?"

This escape from the tethering cords of a definite, datable Revelation in religion shows itself not only in the hedonist of our day, but also in the religious philosopher and the intellectualist. In the new school of naturalistic religion, personality such as we have thought of in God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son has a hard time maintaining itself. The philosophy of personalism seems to fade out into the philosophy of naturalism. For example, Edward Scribner Ames in a recent book says: "It is no more strange that religion should have this general term 'God' than that science should have the word 'Nature,' or that politics should speak of the 'World' or that philosophy should conceive the 'Cosmos.' If these are 'concrete universals,' may not God also be a concrete universal? . . . The term 'God' expresses order and purpose and moral values in the great Reality which we call Life of the World. Reality conceived as friendly, as furnishing support for man's existence, and for the realization of ideal ends, is God."[5] Or turn to another of our modern writers upon religion to whom we are indebted for two of the most vital and stimulating books written

[5] Ames, "Naturalistic Religion." Henry Holt and Company.

within our generation. Dr. Henry Nelson Wieman, in an article on "Is Sin Out of Date?" in the *Christian Century* of March 14, 1929, writes: "What is this extra-human factor involved in the good life which gives rise to sin when man fails to maintain right relations to it? The religious name for it is God. But what do we mean by God? The way to find answer to that question is not to turn away from nature, but to turn to nature with the understanding that everything in man is intimately and inextricably bound up in the whole working of the cosmos." And then a few lines later: "If man has flaming imagination and creative power, then it is because the working of the cosmos flames forth through him with imagination and creativity. And what does this flame of imagination illuminate? It illuminates something more wonderful still. It dimly illuminates the unfathomable possibilities which are wrought into the very nature of things. Are these possibilities merely the possibilities of man considered apart from the cosmos? Plainly not. These possibilities are the possibilities of that which from all eternity has been at work in the cosmos. Not the cosmos in general, but the cosmos as consisting of possibilities for good, imagined and unimagined, is God. It is against this that we sin."

These words out of the heart of modern religious thinking are profound and scholarly. I am sure I do not comprehend all their philosophic background, to say nothing of their subtle theistic implications. But a preacher of the gospel to sin-stricken and honestly confused multitudes, to say nothing of his lay brother, the man in the street, may be pardoned for remarking that we have gone a long way from the religious experience of the men who gave utterance to heart cries after a personal God such as these: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers." "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this wrong in thy sight." "It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do." "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Humanity can never nestle its broken heart up against a "concrete universal" and the Cosmos seems kindly to us only when we can think of it as our "Father's world" and the unfolding revelation of Eternal Goodness that in the form of a personal God bore a cross before the foundation of the world. To the ordinary man this doctrine has no message and he is almost certain to say with the Indian sage, "The worship of the Impersonal laid no hold upon my heart."

There is one other form of modern religious thinking that challenges the whole idea of a historical manifestation of God in the flesh. It had its origin doubtless in Kant, who in his "Critique of Practical Reason" does away with the necessity of any transcendent elements in religion. The doctrine has many disciples in our day. God has no objective personal identity. He exists, to be sure, but he is an idea, a belief, a subjective Ideal which we have created, each man for himself, because we cannot get along somehow without this regulative, spiritual Idea. Professor McGiffert, in the *Harvard Theological Review,* says: "We do not get God from the universe, we give him to the universe. We read significance and moral purpose into it. We assume God, not to account for the world, but for the subjective need of realizing our highest good." This does away with any absolute values in religion except such as are purely subjective. God becomes the projection of a personal need, the sublimation of a social conscience. "Religion is not discovered, but self-created, a sort of sublime expediency."

Such humanistic thinking cuts directly athwart the path of the Christian tradition. Its implications must be faced. It has no place for the historic and scant patience with the transcendental in faith. It depersonalizes God and resolves him into a creature no greater than the human mind that creates it. Demetrius-like, we fashion our own gods; but not of silver and gold, but of inward urges and spiritual impulses. Jesus becomes only a dreamer of whom men still mystically dream. Prayer is the projection of one's psychological self upon an imaginative ear. Praying does things only in so far as it subjectively relieves the tension incident upon a repressed desire. Salvation is inner adjustment to unhappy circumstances, either without or within. There is no moral code that has any authority greater than any contemporary generation chooses to give it. The Ten Commandments are hopelessly out-moded and the Sermon on the Mount has no authority in the school of behaviorism. It is this kind of philosophy that is eating out the moral fiber of our generation. Culture, once the handmaid of religion, becomes the secret enemy in the household of faith. Dr. Henry Sloane Coffin, speaking at a recent commencement of Union Theological Seminary, throws out this warning: "It would seem that the belated Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy is passing. Both sides must recognize a serious menace to vital Christian faith on the horizon in the Humanist movement which makes 'God' simply a name for the ethical ideal evolved by mankind and attempts to draw its moral standards from a study of human behavior." It seems that we may be forced again to face the struggle that is implied in the graphic words of the prophet Zechariah: "I will stir up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece."

Let us turn back again to the New Testament. We feel immediately the change in climate. We move out at once from the fog banks of philosophy and emerge into the sunshine of a great experience. One cannot but wonder whether after all we have only succeeded in making religion so complex and rationalistic that plain folks, who, fortunately or unfortunately, comprise the most of humanity, are baffled and pass it by in confusion. Are our difficulties made by our laboring philosophies? Possibly the quaint words of Berkeley still rebuke us: "We have first raised a dust and then complain we cannot see." One may venture to recall that Pharisaism and scribism in their day represented the aristocracy of brains, but they none the less shut the door of the kingdom in the face of their generation; that scholasticism gave vital religion the dry-rot; that English deism took God out of his world and set him upon a distant throne of awesome majesty and that much of our modern philosophy is hopelessly and confessedly mired deep in despair on the road to Reality. One is not shocked to hear an apostle of modern pessimism declare, after disposing of the orthodox view of Jesus as the Son of God, "that the task of constructing, in the disciplined human imagination, a conception of God compatible with the framework and perspective of modern knowledge is so difficult and baffling as to be, for all practical purposes, futile. Any conception of God compatible with modern knowledge would be so vague and indefinite as to be of no direct utility with reference to a personal religion for man here on earth."[6] Here is pessimism so dark that, to one who believes it, life becomes a "tale told by an idiot." When we think of these blind leaders trying to blaze the way into a new religion, we are tempted to cry out as did Festus to Paul: "Thy much learning turneth thee to madness."

The men that lived the glowing experiences of the first century and then translated them into the burning words of the New Covenant of Jesus Christ knew whom they had believed. Religion was to them a glorious certainty. They had staked their fortunes, their families, their future on it; and when the curtain was rung on the earthly drama of their faith they were more than ever convinced that they were right. They might not understand Jesus, but they were willing to trust him; they might not be able to interpret the self-consciousness of this Man, but they would follow him

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[6] Harry Elmer Barnes, in *Forum,* April, 1929.

"Through earth or hell or sky."

This loyalty does not seem strange during his earthly life. The personality of Jesus must have been terribly but wondrously compelling. He walks through the midst of an angry mob untouched and unharmed and the next moment holds to his breast the clinging form of an unfearing child. When he spoke, men answered; when he looked into the human heart, it yielded; when he died on a cross, even an unfeeling soldier cried out, "This man was the Son of God." Never has so much of the dynamic of spiritual authority been crowded into one human form.

But one day the world slew him on a cross. He passed over the same dark threshold along which the unwilling feet of humanity have pressed since the beginning of time. "As in Adam all die"—and he was in Adam and he died and was buried in a sealed and guarded sepulcher. The movement crumbled, the disciples scattered, the women wept their hearts away, and all that remained was a blessed memory and a broken hope. "We hoped that it was he who should redeem Israel."

And then they see him again. The sepulcher is open, the grave is empty. The Lord is risen. They hear his voice, they touch the scars in his hands, they break bread with him on the seashore. Five hundred witnesses testify to the truth they hardly dare believe. He is different, but he is the same. Trailing clouds of glory he has come back from death and the grave; and while minds stagger and human wills reel under the impact of an otherworldly Presence, they fall at his feet and with one voice cry, "My Lord, and my God!" *Jesus is alive.*

It is this strange fact that from now on dominates the scene. If this had been any ordinary man, his disappointed followers would mournfully have admitted, "Now he is dead," but instead of this they stake their integrity, yea their very life, upon the conviction that he is not dead but alive in a real and personal sense. This experience had its roots in his own utterances. Jesus when he faced death did not face it as other men do. There was no sense of defeat in his spirit. So far from contemplating the withdrawal or dimunition of his influence, he actually predicted its persistence and augmentation. His last recorded words were, "I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." If this sentence had been spoken by any one eles, it would have been a poetic but sad prophecy. But with Jesus it becomes literal truth. "It is expedient for you that I go away." His death simply served to enlarge the scope and influence of his personal presence. It was not some ghostly memory that haunted men and challenged them to obedience and death. It was Jesus himself, in spiritual presence, appealing to believers in the same way in which he had appealed through his divine-human personality in the flesh. Every page of the New Testament throbs with the consciousness of his personal presence. It is the chief thesis of the New Testament writers. The Gospels without exception bear witness to his return from the grave. Stephen, dying for his faith, cries, "I see Jesus." Saul of Tarsus, arrested on the road to Damascus, asks, "Who art thou?" and the reply is, "I am Jesus." Peter standing before the crowd at Pentecost asserts, "This Jesus did God raise up." And this assurance that he was alive forevermore translates itself into a spiritual dynamic the like of which the world has never seen before or since. We might crowd these pages with the exultant words of a great cloud of witnesses who rejoice to testify to the fact of a living Christ. The words of the apostle Paul sum up the very spirit and genius of New Testament history when he says, "I live; and yet not I, but *Christ liveth in me.*" And he *was* in them, a victorious spirit, a living power just as powerful and significant as when he walked with them by the Syrian Sea or shared with them the sacramental supper in the upper room.

This fact of a Living Christ is our hope and promise in religion. If we can lay hold of him who hath laid hold upon our hearts, we shall find life and peace. We are weary of religions *about* Jesus; we want the religion *of* Jesus. We cannot understand the ethical implications of the Sermon on the Mount apart from the transforming power of the Personality that spoke it. We have fumbled too long amid the graveclothes of the past when One stands in our midst that we know not of. We have talked about "Back to Jesus" in one form or another until some of us have been persuaded that he is back somewhere, perhaps in the echo of a voice, or the lines of a gospel narrative, or on a cross outside Jerusalem. "He is not here. He is risen, and goeth before you." He is the timeless Redeemer. He speaks our language and grapples with our problems.

> "The healing of the seamless dress
> Is by *our* beds of pain;
> We touch him in life's throng and press,
> And we are whole again."

His roots have gotten down into "the crannies of our thought and life." He has "got hold of our thinking processes." We judge all things by him. We evaluate life by his standards. "After two thousand years we are not able to give him up." In the midst of our uncertainties and while we cry out for some certainty that will "grip our very beings," we are sure of Christ. The "universe is clouded, but Christ is one bright and luminous spot in it, and that spot we can utterly trust." The Fact of Bethlehem has become the Fact of the Universe, and the light on the hills of Judea has become the Light of the World.

Here is our hope for building a strong and vigorous type of personal religion. One suspects that our modern world is still unsatisfied until it sees Him and wistfully turns for guidance to men and women who have themselves "experienced Jesus." No amount of Bible study can save us; no ethical culture is sufficient to satisfy our hearts, no endless running hither and yon in worthy religious activities meets our final need. It is only as we find Christ, living now in spiritual presence, and speaking to us authentically in the midst of our daily life tasks, that we come to that satisfaction of soul that we know to be Reality. We cannot meet the world and its allurements unless we can have Him by our side. It is not enough that he prayed for Peter in the hour of trial; we must know that he prays for us to-day. No dead Christ can save a living generation. To know Christ in personal and vivid experience, to walk in constant fellowship with him, to know that he is alive because he lives in us, this is "the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" to every believer who humbly but in confidence walks the Christian Way.

This is the new note in Christian preaching. The dull and profitless days of the pulpit have been those times when men were lured into the bypaths of speculation and theology and preached a pale Christ of the creeds rather than a stalwart Master of the Road. Every new advance in Christian history has been ushered in by a significant effort to reinterpret Jesus. What do we mean when we speak of "preaching Christ"? Is this just another of those smug platitudes that soothe our ministerial souls? Or is this after all the sum and substance of our message, the very heart of our evangel? It is even this. The preacher that does not know Christ in personal, life-transforming experience, will sound like the echo of a dead voice in the pulpit. No amount of learning or clever psychology and pious cant can conceal the absence of an experimental knowledge of Jesus as a living and immediately available Lord and Master. This is the knowledge that lies beyond the pale of homiletic technique and comes to its flower only in the secret garden of the soul.

Dr. R. W. Dale, that prince of English preachers, had an experience in the midst of his ministerial career that changed the whole tone and emphasis of his preaching. His son tells the story: "He was writing an Easter sermon, and when halfway through the thought of the living Christ broke in upon him as it had never done before. To use his own words: '"Christ is alive," I said to myself. "Alive! Can that really be true—living as really as I myself am?" I got up and walked about repeating: *"Christ is living!"* At first it seemed strange and hardly true, but at last it came upon me as a burst of sudden glory. . . . It was to me a new discovery. I thought all along I had believed it; but not until that moment did I feel sure of it. I then said: "My people shall know it; I shall preach about it again and again until they believe it as I do now."'"[7] For this note of personal experience our pulpits wait. It is the supreme authority in religion.

It is true that Christ was born in Bethlehem in the days of Cæsar Augustus; it is no less true that he is born again in my heart and yours in the year of our Lord 1930. It is true that God spoke to men in the flesh in yonder golden hours; it is no less true that God speaks to us in the spirit in these latter days. It is true that Christ died upon the cross once for all, but it is also true that he ever liveth to make intercession for us with "groanings that cannot be uttered." It is one birth, it is one voice, it is one sacrament of love, "for a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past." The historical fact of Jesus has become the experimental certainty of every living age. Christ is our eternal Contemporary.

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[7] "Biography of R. W. Dale of Birmingham," by his son, pp. 642, 643.

"Had He not breathed His breath
Truly at Nazareth;
Had not His very feet
Roamed many a hill and street;
Had Mary's story gone
To Time's oblivion;
Had the sweet record paled,
And the truth not prevailed;
Dormant and bleak had been
This transitory scene,
And dark, thrice dark our earth,
Unknowing of His birth.

The flowers beheld His face,
The stars knew His white grace.
The grass was greener for
His humble stable door;
The rose upon its stem
Redder for Bethlehem.
And we—are we not wise
To cling with avid eyes
To the old tale, and be
Moved by its memory?
Unutterably dim
Our bright world, lacking him." [8]

[8] Charles Hanson Towne.

CHAPTER II

THE MIRACLE IN REVELATION: HISTORY, NATURE, AND GRACE

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I

THE influence of Jesus did not cease with his death. For most men of genius the accident of death translates them from the realm of potent world forces. The passing of the Galilean served only to enlarge the domain of his personal influence and tighten his hold upon the minds of his followers. Almost immediately he becomes a world figure. History takes its dating from his birth and all years are now "the years of our Lord." He becomes the watershed of history. Movements of social struggle and of ethical and moral evolution in the long years preceding his birth are judged by the standards of his teaching and life, and in all the centuries since his death we find ourselves coming back to test our civilization by the norm of his ideal. "His colossal intellect spans all the centuries. You cannot date the mind of Jesus." There are solid reasons for this which lie in the very constitution of human nature and the relationship of Jesus Christ to world progress. We shall mention three of the many grounds upon which his authority in human history rests.

This influence is posited first of all upon the catholic quality of his person. Although he was born a Jew, died on a Roman cross, and his life story was written in the Greek language, he belonged to no single race or blood. Not only does Jesus during his life transcend these provincial limitations, but as soon as men accept him and his philosophy of life they move at once into the larger freedom of the universal mind. Stephen, Paul, and even James and Simon Peter become world citizens under the impact of the spirit of Jesus. Christianity soon moved upon the Gentile world and was brought face to face with Greek and Roman cultures. Although the early movement was handicapped by the most intense racial prejudice in the Græco-Roman world—that against the Jew—this was not sufficient to impede the rapid progress of the Christian idea. Underneath the black skin of an Ethiopian or the olive complexion of a Greek there beat a human heart that was searching for God, and when these and kindred spirits of other races were confronted by the Christ they surrendered to the universal Saviour and gladly gave him their enthusiastic devotion. There was something in Jesus that answered to a conscious need of their souls, a need that lay deep beneath the accident of race or clime in the elemental kinship of the human spirit with the Divine. Jesus, liberated by his death from the narrowing confines of Judaism, becomes the Ideal Man. As civilizations rise and fall and one culture after another succeds to the ascendancy, this prophet of Nazareth remains the "sovereign Seer of time" and is worshiped as "man's best Man and love's best Love."

Furthermore, Jesus gained his place in the centuries that succeeded his death by the quality of his ethical ideal. The world of the first century was sunk in shame and moral despair. Paul describes it in the closing verses of the first chapter of Romans. "God gave them up unto a reprobate mind." Into the rotting corruption of a world that had "exchanged the truth of God for a lie," the gospel of Jesus Christ came as a cleansing and prophylactic power. The quiet, law-abiding, sacrificial life of the men and women of the Way made its impression upon observers, and hatred and persecution were conquered by the instinctive acknowledgment that here was a superior class of people whose credentials were their characters. They *outlived* the pagan world, and even the worldling knows virtue when he sees it.

It was this ethical standard of living set up by Jesus that met a response which was not affected by the historical development of Christianity. The ethical is at last the universal. How to adjust one's own personal living to the principles and implications of the moral law is a problem which belongs not to one part of humanity but to all the children of men. "The unchanging element in our religion has been its ethical teaching. Its doctrines have been differently understood in each generation; its institutions and ritual have assumed many forms and have given rise to countless divisions. But the ethical demands have never varied. They were set forth two thousand years ago—but they are still valid, in practically their whole extent, for all sections of the Church. It is this permanence of moral teaching which insures the identity of the religion amidst all changes."[1] When Jesus spoke the Sermon on the Mount he made it certain that neither his person nor his teaching could ever be disassociated from the history of ethical endeavor or moral philosophy. Men are still reaching up after that ideal, to-day more than ever before in history. The Golden Rule is still golden.

In a still further sense Jesus is bound up with the development of world life. He sets forth a new and compelling goal for personal and social endeavor. "Whither bound?" had always been the question that disturbed men. Is there a worthy goal to living? Will the end justify the process? Will time end in darkness or in light? These inquiries never have and never will down until the human spirit is dead and the universe has become its sepulcher. Jesus faced this problem in his teaching concerning the character of the kingdom. His parables of the mustard seed, the growing seed, and the wheat and the tares all bear upon his teaching that progress is by evolution from within rather than revolution from without. The mustard seed is "the smallest of all seed," but under the nurture of sun and rain and soil it becomes a mighty tree. So the Christian ideal, to the outward eye, is "a root out of dry ground" and "there is no beauty that we should desire" it. But this tender plant of the good life, once rooted in individual wills or the social mind, becomes a tree of giant proportions "whose leaves are for the healing of the nations." Jesus put new vigor into a stale century and lifted the eyes of his generation from the narrow boundaries of provincialism to behold the shoreless domain of the kingdom of heaven.

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[1] Ernest F. Scott, "The Ethical Teaching of Jesus," Introduction IX. The Macmillan Company.

The tale of the years from the first century until now fills one with misgivings and not infrequently with shame. Christianity had to fight its way against a surrounding paganism to which belonged all the powers of this world. Without political influence or social prestige the followers of Christ forced their way of living and their central object of devotion upon a civilization that had spurned its gospel and crucified its God. This victory, however, was not without loss. Too often the struggle between conflicting ideals ended in compromise and mutual concession. Christianity became an ecclesiasticism, its divinely empowered witnesses became priests ordained by the touch of human hands, its simple gospel of salvation was obscured by confusing ritual, and the sacraments took the place of faith as an approach to a throne of grace. On the intellectual side the story is equally disappointing. Faced with the necessity of building a system of thought that would afford rational explanation for this potent force that had come into their world, the theologians of the centuries following debated and philosophized and theologized over Jesus until they almost lost him in the doctrinal dust which they stirred up over his person. In an effort to establish his place in the Trinity they quite forgot to emphasize his place in humanity. While these controversies seem strange and oftentimes futile to our utilitarian mind, their very existence is in fact profoundly significant in any interpretation of history. The truth is that Jesus had become so unavoidable and Christianity had taken so deep a root in civilization that men were simply compelled to formulate a creed to explain him and a church to regiment his followers. Say what you will about the darkness of the Middle Ages, you must reckon with the fact that they spent their energies almost exculsively upon an effort to understand God and to build a society, both in Church and State, that should express his authority over human life. The conclaves of their day had to do with religion and theology, not business and pleasure. Everywhere throughout Europe the graceful lines of Gothic spires pointed men to God, to heaven, and to the transcendent values of the spirit. The cathedral was the natural and inevitable expression of centuries whose chief passion was the search after the Divine. Before we speak too hastily in derision from the seat of the scornful let us be sure that a skyscraper is a worthier monument to a generation than a Gothic spire. In the light of eternity we may be glad to take our place with a century that built the Cathedral of Milan to the glory of God rather than with the age that rears the Woolworth Tower in honor of the nickel and the dime. One fact is certain, you cannot turn the leaves of the book of history from the first century until now without finding on every page this Figure who compels attention and is forever pointing the way to the city of God.

II

The natural world yields its testimony no less surely than the pages of history. We are the children of nature and our mortal life is nurtured, sustained, and completely environed by a set of forces, visible and invisible, which we call the physical universe. Does this outward world bear any relationship to God? Is it, as our forefathers seemed to think, entirely wicked and of the Evil One? Are nature and grace forever at odds or is grace the complement and completion of nature? How vital these questions are is indicated by the thrusts made at each other through the centuries on the part of the protagonists of Science and the defenders of Religion. Men have insisted, and never more than to-day, upon knowing whether the world of nature is in any real sense a manifestation of a Personal God? The answer to this question leads us back again to Jesus.

In discussing Jesus's attitude and relationship to the natural world, we are confronted at once by the seemingly simple and obvious fact that *he was born in it.* "The Word *became flesh,* and dwelt among us." The life of Jesus Christ was the human life of God. Humanity cannot be essentially base if it is capable, even at its best, of "enfleshing" the God that has created it. Bishop E. R. Hendrix says: "It was our humanity at its best that the Holy Spirit used in fashioning the human body of Jesus, which, unmarred by personal sin as it had been born without original sin, was to be raised from the dead and become the glorified body which he wears upon the throne."[2] Jesus regards his body as holy, an instrument responsive to spiritual ends. The human body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and therefore must not be defiled by lust, but glorified and tranformed "from glory unto glory" until it becomes the highest vehicle of the divine, the "spiritual body."

Even as Jesus dwelt in a human body with no sense of shame, so he was perfectly at home in the natural world around him. We have been slow to grasp the significance of Jesus's feeling for and delight in the world of nature. It is an attitude that denies many of our medieval and unscriptural views of the natural world and should reveal to us an entirely different thought concerning the laws and forms of the physical universe. Read the Gospels for testimony. They pulsate with the myriad voices of nature. Jesus is talking to men about seed and flowers and soil and wind and rain and sky. He sleeps on the bosom of Galilee and prays on the heights of Hermon. Water is the symbol of life and light is the synonym of service. He goes to a garden in the last hours of his soul's agony, and when he dies it is upon a tree made into a cross and lifted up upon a hillside. Sidney Lanier has caught in rare lines this spiritual sympathy between Jesus and the outward world:

"Into the woods my Master went,
Clean forspent, forspent.
Into the woods my Master came,

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[2] "The Religion of the Incarnation," p. 55.

Forspent with love and shame.
But the olives they were not blind to Him,
The little gray leaves were kind to Him;
The thorn trees had a mind to Him
When into the woods He came.

Out of the woods my Master went,
And He was well content.
Out of the woods my Master came,
Content with death and shame.
When Death and Shame would woo Him last,
From under the trees they drew Him last;
'Twas on a tree they slew Him—last
When out of the woods He came."

We may take a further step. Jesus not only dwelt in sympathetic responsiveness to the natural world, but he regarded it always as a ceaseless manifestation of divine life. He dwelt in a world where every whispering breeze and wayside flower spoke to him of his Father. He knew well the structure of the universe, but no insistence upon the uniformity of secondary causes blurred his vision of the first great Cause. All was law, to be sure, but he knew that, in an even deeper sense, all was Love. If we seek for the positive evidence of this awareness of Jesus to the immanence of God in nature, we shall find it revealed in at least two essential attitudes on his part.

First, his sensitiveness to beauty. He stands one day amid the glory of a Palestinian meadow studded with the lilies of the field. They are to him not botanical specimens created by the chemistry of soil and sun; they are the veritable vestments of the Eternal.

The lilies of the field are not made by human artifice. They are the workmanship of God. His creative art surpasses even Solomon, whose kingly glory looks tawdry in comparison with the scarlet beauty of a bed of wild poppies. Jesus definitely attributes this lavishness of beauty in the world of nature to the fact that beauty also dwells in Him who "doth so clothe the grass of the field."

"A haze on the far horizon,
  The infinite, tender sky;
The ripe, rich tint of the cornfield,
  And the wild geese sailing high;
And all over upland and lowland
  The charm of the goldenrod—
Some of us call it Autumn,
  And others call it God." [3]

Such a view of nature would be boldly revolutionary in our thinking. It would add color and meaning to every day of existence. The fairylands of our childhood would be surpassed by the wonderlands of our souls' maturity where storm clouds and soft evening breezes, where flowers and fields of grain, where restless atoms and swinging planets would all unite to attest the truth of the line in Joseph Addison's hymn:

"The hand that made us is divine!"

Jesus lived in such a sensitiveness to natural beauty. He was aware of a conscious and eternal Spirit back of it and in it. Many times he must have experienced those moments which to us are only too rare when the Soul of the universe speaks to the soul within us and the brooding peace of nature gathers up into itself the multitudinous strivings of our restless spirits. It may be a sunset, or the purple haze on distant hills, or a bird note at dusk, or the majestic splendor of a storm at sea. It may be a field of bluebonnets in Texas when the spring comes or an hour of the Indian night just before the first glimmer of dawn when the stars are unbelievably clear and close above; but wherever and whenever the vision comes, we can but be aware that we have touched the hem of the garment of God.

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[3] From "Each in His Own Tongue," by William Herbert Carruth. Used by permission.

These soul impressions must not be confused with sense impressions. The witness of our spirits to spiritual reality is as authentic as the witness of our physical senses to material substance. We are still within the realm of experience and, to quote Arthur Stanley Eddington, "Those who would wish to take cognizance of nothing but the measurements of the scientific world made by our sense organs are shirking one of the most immediate facts of experience—namely, that consciousness is not wholly, nor even primarily, a device for receiving sense impressions." He goes further to say in the same connection, "We do ask whether philosophy can justify such an outlook on nature. Rather our system of philosophy is itself on trial; it must stand or fall according as it is broad enough to find room for this experience as an element of life."[4] Thus the scientist adds his testimony to the insight of the poet when he sings:

> "Beauty is truth, truth beauty—that is all
> Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."[5]

Furthermore, the processes of creation are still going on in the world in which Jesus lived. "My father worketh *even until now, and I work."* No life is possible then or now except for the creating and sustaining energy of God. "In him we live, and move, and have our being." Without lapsing into pantheism we can still be aware that God is the continuing, undiminished source of all cosmic life. This theistic conception of the universe has been held to be not only morally desirable but also scientifically necessary. Lord Kelvin, the greatest philosophical scientist of the closing days of the nineteenth century, wrote to the London *Times:* "Scientific thought is compelled to accept the idea of Creative Power. Forty years ago I asked Liebig, walking somewhere in the country, if he believed that the grass and the flowers which he saw around us grew by mere chemical forces. He answered: 'No, no more than I could believe that the books of botany describing them could grow by mere chemical forces.' Every action of human free will is a miracle to physical and chemical and mathematical science."[6] This is the gospel of Jesus. God is the universal Parent who made heaven and earth, and while he is immanent in all he has made, he is transcendent above his creation. The far-reaching implications of this conception of life are clear at once. God comes out of the shadows into the light. He is not in some remote heavenly habitation carefully preening his majesty and in aloofness watching the world whirl on its axis until such a time as, all hope abandoned, it shall turn in desperation to him and await the hour, predetermined and prophetically visualized, when he shall step back again into his world and chain the devil and take the saints home to glory. No such enervating apocalypticism is to be found in the teaching of Jesus. In God the Father the universe is spirit-woven, sense and soul are not at war, spirit and matter are reconciled. God, as Archbishop Fenelson said, is "in everything, and everything in him; all that exists, existing only by communication of his exhaustless being; all that has intelligence, having it only by derivation from his sovereign reason; all that acts, acting only from the impulse of his supreme activity." Some years ago I came across the lines of a poem whose author I do not know, but whose truth has lingered with me.

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[4] Eddington, "Science and the Unseen World," pp. 44, 46. The Macmillan Company.

[5] Keats, "Ode on a Grecian Urn."

[6] Bowne's "Immanence of God," p. 21. Houghton Mifflin Company.

"O blind, blind seeker to the primal cell,
Tracing this Spirit with dissecting knife,
Dost thou not hear in every passing bell,
In pain and darkness, in sin and doubt and strife,
The Voice that breathes through heaven and earth and hell,
Sun, moon, and farthest star, 'I am Life'?"

With this view of the universe the modern scientific man is bound to reckon. If these things be true, many of the fundamental premises of modern science tremble on their foundations. We are not so sure as we once were. Our materialistic explanation of the world somehow falls short. We must either respectfully bow God out of the universe, as Bertrand Russell does, or we must reckon with him in the whole dynamic process. There does not seem to be any longer an alternative between atheism with its resultant materialism and faith with its implication of theism. Mechanism has had its day. It has broken down on its own logic. Law and order are attributes of Mind and Will. "The new God," says Dr. Millikan, "is the God of law and order." But even here we must move with caution. God does not exist because law and order are discoverable in the world. Rather law and order are corollaries that flow out of the initial fact of God himself. The author of Genesis was not so unscientific after all when he said: "In the *beginning God.*" Let the scientist himself speak. Alfred Russell Wallace says: "Matter is essentially force, and nothing but force: force is will and nothing but will, and that the will of one Supreme Intelligence."[7] Or, quoting again from Eddington: "It is, I think, of the very essence of the unseen world that the conception of personality should dominate it."[8] I would not seem to multiply testimony needlessly, but this conception of a Personal Spiritual Will back of all the phenomena of nature is becoming so central in the thinking of the larger and better group of modern scientists that I ask you to indulge me while I quote one more witness. In the Gifford Lectures for 1927-28 J. S. Haldane, "England's greatest biologist," says: "It is only a narrow view of what is 'natural' that prevents our recognizing the presence of God everywhere within and around us. The spiritual world of values which we ordinarily recognize is something far less abstract and unreal than what we call the physical universe. But the spiritual world is also the world of Nature unless we confine the connotation of the word 'Nature' to a mere idealized conception of reality. When, moreover, we look at this spiritual world as a whole, it appears as one Spiritual Reality in which individual interests and individual values disappear as such. It is this which we recognize when we speak, in the language of religion, of God. Nothing else is real except God, and relations of time and space are only the order of His manifestations. Nature is just the manifestation of God, and evolution is no mere biological or physical phenomenon, but the order in time-relations of His manifestation."[9] Theology and science may be as far apart as the poles, but religion and science may be closer together than we have ever dared to dream.

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[7] Quoted by A. J. Schofield in "The Borderlands of Science," p. 194.

[8] Eddington, "Science and the Unseen World," p. 82. The Macmillan Company.

I turn aside to raise a question. The miracles of

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[9] "The Sciences and Philosophy," p. 295. Doubleday, Doran and Company.

Jesus in the realm of nature have troubled us. They have often proved a stumblingblock to faith. Our modern scientific mind tends to scoff at such supernaturalism. The difficulty has been resolved by the critic when he regards these as apocryphal and not dependable accounts of fact. We have hidden our confusion in a show of verbal gymnastics by saying that we do not believe in Jesus because of the miracles, but we believe in the miracles because of Jesus. This gets us nowhere. Faith in Jesus ought not to be weighed down with the doubtful values of such intellectual obscurantism. The miraculous is woven into the texture of the New Testament. Miracles of nature abound upon its pages. Our chief difficulty with them is that they seem to violate the fundamental principles of "law and order." May it not be that theology has made God the victim of a process of nature rather than made the process the expression of his personality? In other words, our limited intelligence has discovered a few of the ways in which "Nature" works; surely we have not discovered all those mysterious ways; and now we have penned God up in the narrow confines of our fragmentary knowledge. There may be another power in this natural world beside the law of uniformity, and that may be the power of moral will, and nature may be called to stand at attention and do obeisance to the high moral purpose that moves through the world to the achievement of an ultimate goal in personal and social character.

III

If Jesus has furnished us the score by which we can understand the spiritual overtones of history and has lifted the veil from the face of God in the world of nature, we should expect that in the realm of grace his revelation should reach "the topmost, ineffablest, uttermost crown." History is the playground of human struggle; nature is the spatial and time relationships amid which life makes its home. The soul is the central spot of reality in God's universe. All exists for man; laws and institutions, spiritual yearnings and divine revelations have significance only as they ultimate in the growth and perfection of the human soul. Surely the divine Revealer would not leave himself without witness here. And once again the experience of Jesus and the story of the New Testament is our source material.

Jesus had a radiant consciousness of God within his soul. It is this personal experience of an indwelling, companionable Presence that gives authority to all his words and deeds. "The words that I say unto you I speak not from myself: but the Father abiding in me doeth his works." Jesus experienced God as an indwelling Spirit in whom he literally lived and moved and had his being. This fact of God's nearness explains his sense of safety from physical perils, it explains his poise amid the clamorous opposition of the world. It reveals the urge and necessity of his prayer life and throws light upon his temper and spirit in the hour of trial and crucifixion. Why should he defend himself before Pilate when the omnipotent King of kings stood by his side? While this consciousness of God may have been unique in its depth and clarity, it was achieved and sustained along the same road of spiritual toil that characterizes the journey of the human soul to-day—namely, solitude and prayer and loving service. Furthermore, Jesus evidently intended that his faith in God and personal experience with God should be shared by his followers.

But could this miracle of fellowship be performed again? Jesus had said, "I and the Father are one." Could any mere man enjoy such a luminous and impregnating experience of the divine Presence that words similar to these could fall from his lips and not be adjudged blasphemy? Surely this were the supreme miracle—the miracle in personality. And identically this is what happened. The evidence is beyond dispute. A young Pharisee of the city of Tarsus by the name of Saul was born about the same year in which Jesus was born. So far as we know he never saw the Galilean in the flesh. He had devoted his life to solidifying the defenses of his beloved Judaism against the encroachments of this false Messiah. And then the miracle happened. Jesus spoke to him out of the bleeding mouth of tortured but innocent victims of his fury. "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." But you know the story. I shall not repeat it. Saul received a new name and a new nature. Instead of hating Jesus, he loved him. Instead of imprisoning men and women, he set them free. Instead of stamping out this Name, he proclaimed it to the ends of the world.

Such a miraculous change of attitude demands an explanation. It is nothing short of a miracle within the will "as great as the miracle of the turning back of the waters of the Red Sea." The answer is to be found just where the secret of Jesus is to be found—namely, in the unassailable certainty that God himself dwells within his soul, very life of very life, "closer than breathing, nearer than hands or feet." Read his manifesto of spiritual reality in the Epistle to the Galatians. Here Paul reveals the full extent of the journey he had taken from the dismal swamps of legalism to the clear heights of spiritual liberty. When it was the good pleasure of God, who called him through his grace, to reveal his Son in him, he conferred not with flesh and blood, but sought the solitude of an Arabian desert that he might commune face to face with the Risen Christ. Disentangled from the yoke of his old bondage to religion of the letter, he became the apostle of a spiritual faith that has lighted an inner glow on the altar of every man's heart who would find God within. "I have been crucified with Christ; *and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me:* and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me. I do not make void the grace of God." This is the testimony of one who knew the power of the living Christ dwelling within the human spirit. He sealed his witness with his blood, and thus in his death he was again united with One whose blood was shed on Calvary. I feel distinctly that whether we stand by the headsman's ax in the prison of Rome or at the foot of the cross on Golgotha, we are not far in either case from the blood-bought center of the reality that men seek in religion.

This miracle in the human heart is a continuous and undiminished work of divine grace. Jesus is still "the power of God unto salvation" and "the joy of loving hearts." Through all the centuries his promise of power has been fulfilled when men would tarry in his presence. Of believers without number it may be said that "they looked unto him and were radiant." I should like to ask your indulgence while I place here in order a group of these high spiritual experiences. Jesus led us to expect that we might know God and believing have life eternal. Men and women have tested that promise in every century and under every kind of condition. We are surrounded with such a cloud of witnesses that it is difficult to single out those whose testimony shall be heard to the glory of God. Your knowledge of these characters that follow will convince you of two facts that have a direct bearing upon the significance of their testimony. First, whatever may be the form and language of their testimony, you will not miss the note of reality in it; and secondly, in each case a life of unselfish, sacrificial service has crowned the witness with the authority of deeds.

More than two centuries ago in a monastery in France lived a strange man who was known as "Brother Lawrence." He was a servant in the kitchen and his humble origin and limited education were such as would have inevitably placed him in the list of those whom the world little notices and soon forgets. But not so with this humble mystic. He has left a secret that the world must have and his practice of the presence of God transformed a serving place into a shrine. In his "little conversations" with God as he went about his work he found the joy of a radiant life and the dignity of a humble task done in his name. "Tell Him everything, do everything to His glory, and count every experience, no matter how insignificant it be, a direct service rendered to God."

And now our own John Wesley in the eighteenth century. Slowly emerging from the wilderness of his own soul's groping after reality, he records that passage in his "Journal" that is the *locus classicus* in the annals of Methodism: "In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. At a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for my salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death." Out of that experience and its subsequent interpretation in a gospel of salvation by personal faith in Jesus Christ, came the revival of the eighteenth century and the Methodist churches that girt the world to-day.

Turn now to William Cowper, the English poet, and hear the moving recital of his conversion. "I flung myself into a chair near the window, and seeing a Bible there ventured once more to apply to it for comfort and instruction. The first verse I saw was the twenty-fifth of the third chapter of Romans: 'Whom God sent forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God.' Immediately I received strength to believe and the full beams of the Sun of Righteousness shone upon me. In a moment I believed and received the gospel. . . . Unless the Almighty arm had been under me, I think I should have died with gratitude and joy."

Moving into another realm, we have this rare bit of personal testimony from Prof. Franz Delitzsch of Leipsic, one of the great scholars of the nineteenth century: "Still does my spiritual life find its root in the miraculous soil of that first love which I experienced; still to me is the reality of miracles sealed by the miracles of grace which I saw with my own eyes in the congregations of this blessed valley."[10]

President Finney's conversion is so full of vividness and moving appeal that it recalls the day of Pentecost: "Without any expectation of it, without ever having the thought in my mind that there was any such thing for me . . . the Holy Spirit descended upon me in a manner that seemed to go through me, body and soul. I could feel the impression, like a wave of electricity, going through and through me. Indeed it seemed to come in waves and waves of liquid love. . . . It seemed like the very breath of God. . . . No words can express the wonderful love that was shed abroad in my heart. I wept aloud with joy and love." [11]

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[10] Quoted by Jackson in "The Fact of Conversion," p. 40.

Is this witness to the indwelling power of Christ in human hearts still manifesting itself or is it being withered by the arid winds of modern scientific materialism? Ten thousand insistent voices rise to testify that God is still revealing himself to searching hearts and that the strange transforming power of his grace is the living witness to the living Christ. Evangeline Booth quotes the words of her glorified father as an evidence of what God is doing to those who have courage to follow him: "I hungered for Hell. I pushed into the midst of it, the East Side of London. For days I stood in the seething streets, drinking it in and loving it all; yes, I loved it because I loved the souls that made up the muddy stream. I went home one night to my wife and said to her, 'My darling, I have given myself, I have given you, and I have given our children to the service of these souls.' She understood, and together we knelt and prayed. That was the first meeting of the Salvation Army." [12]

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[11] Quoted by James in "Varieties of Religious Experience," p. 225.

[12] Evangeline Booth, "Toward a Better World," p. 169. Doubleday, Doran and Company.

Albert Schweitzer gave up a brilliant career as a university professor of New Testament and philosophy, as a writer and musician of unusual gifts, to become a missionary to the helpless and needy natives of the French Congo. Since 1913 it has been his one passion to share with these backward peoples the spirit of Jesus. I take one vivid incident from that remarkable book, "On the Edge of the Primeval Forest." "The operation is finished, and in the hardly lighted dormitory I watch for the sick man's awakening. Scarcely has he recovered consciousness when he stares about him and ejaculates again and again: 'I've no more pain! I've no more pain!' His hands feel for mine and will not let it go. Then I begin to tell him and others who are in the room that it is the Lord Jesus who has told the doctor and his wife to come to Ogowe, and that white people back in Europe give them the money to live here and cure the sick negroes. Then I have to answer questions as to who these white people are, where they live, and how they know that the natives suffer so much from sickness. The African sun is shining through the coffee bushes into the dark shed, but we, black and white, sit side by side and feel that we know by experience the meaning of the words 'And all ye are brethren.' Would that my generous friends in Europe could come out here and live through one such hour." In a more recent book on "Civilization and Ethics" Dr. Schweitzer has recorded this inspiring bit of personal experience, written down amid the loneliness of his beloved primeval forest: "I live my life in God, in the mysterious ethical divine personality which I cannot discover in the world, but only experience in myself as a mysterious impulse."

The last chapter from this book of personal experiences with God is the story of a successful American business man. Driven to the verge of physical and moral breakdown, he is ordered to give up his business and take the rest cure. Let Philip Cabot, a Harvard graduate and the scion of a notable family, tell his own story.[13]

> Toward the end of August, upon the verge of despair, I went up to my camp in the Connecticut Valley for two weeks of so-called rest, taking along a liberal supply of the "very light" novels on which I was accustomed to feed, and by accident, a little book on "The Meaning of Prayer" [by Harry Emerson Fosdick], which a dear friend had given me to read.
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> It was August, the weather was rather hot and muggy, life looked very bleak, though fortunately not very long, for me, and the novels for a space went well. But after a few days even E. Phillips Oppenheim could not hold my attention, and one hot morning, throwing down the book in despair, my eye fell on "The Meaning of Prayer." I began to browse on it with a vacant mind which rapidly changed to an absorption so complete that I was keenly annoyed by the arrival of lunch

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[13] Philip Cabot, "Except Ye Be Born Again," pp. 18-20. The Macmillan Company. Used by permission.

> time, three hours later. That afternoon I went back to Oppenheim, but, finding him intolerable, took up again "The Meaning of Prayer" with a rather sheepish feeling to be reading such a book. The hours of the afternoon, however, vanished as those of the morning, and supper was another unwelcome interruption. After supper I sat down to think. This thing looked serious. Here was I for the first time in my life bored with novels and absorbed in worship. Was this the first stage of conversion or the madness which precedes death?
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> After a few days of this sort, during which I experimented and examined my sensations with scientific coldness, I was convinced that I was not mad. Something different was in process. It seemed that in worship, or prayer, and in my Bible, the solution to the riddle of my universe had been revealed to me; for I was living in a new world of peace, beauty, and gladness, such as I had never conceived. . . . That condition has continued, except that I have returned to the world of men to take up again my daily chores with the keenest interest and with a sureness of touch and an absence of worry and excitement, and my health has continued to improve in a remarkable way.

No two of these experiences are alike. They stretch from the first century to the twentieth and range from a kitchen scullion to a doctor of philosophy. And yet in all their variety there is an essential similarity. Each of these men has become aware of a Power in them, but not of them, which moves upon their human spirits and transforms them into a glad ecstasy and a wonderful peace. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but knoweth not whither it cometh or where it goeth. *So is every one that is born of the Spirit.*" It may certainly be that we have come into the presence again of that miracle which neither Nicodemus nor any of his ecclesiastically or worldly-minded sons can understand, but which is to Jesus the very alphabet of the kingdom and the inheritance of all those who are born of the Spirit.

The cynic will object that we have drifted away from fact into fancy and exchanged the solid footing of reason for the insecurities of mysticism. But the mystic way has quite often proved to be the practical way of Life. To Paul it was a personal devotion. He lived his life *in Christ.* If he was transported in rhapsodic exaltations to the third heaven, he came back to feel the binding cords of a loyalty to Jesus Christ that could be expressed only in ethical living and service. Men have always journeyed in this highway of the soul's adventure. They have wistfully sought to know the meaning of life and of God. But since Jesus became a fact of history and men looked into his face and saw the divine likeness imprinted there, all the roads of men's spiritual quests seem to end in him. He is there in history, a fact of the long ago, but he is still ahead of us. He is in the forefront of the centuries, and at the end of every road we meet him. Science and nature, history and social struggle, all find us adrift until we can touch the shore line of his thought. Our vaunted pride and boasted knowledge fall away from us and we know that we have gone as far as we can go until a hand is reached out to us and a voice speaks into our hearts, saying, "I am the Truth, follow me."

This is true not only because men have all along been seeking God, but because God has all along been seeking men. He is continually knocking at our hearts. He not only gives his love, but craves ours in response. He yearns to reveal himself to his children. While we were yet sinners he died for us, and to-day he goes up to the very threshold of our free will to let us know that his grace still abounds and that Pentecosts await not his readiness to give but our willingness to receive. We can hear him say in the words of Francis Thompson:

"How little worthy of any love thou art!
Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee
  Save Me, save only Me?
All which I took from thee, I did but take,
  Not for thy harms,
But just that thou mightst seek it in My arms.
  All which thy child's mistake
Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home:
  Rise, clasp My hand, and come!"[14]

History and nature and grace are but three differing manifestations of one self-revealing, self-renewing Life and that Life is Jesus Christ. He is the beginning of our confidence and the end of our hope.

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[14] By permission of the Modern Library, Inc.

CHAPTER III

THE MIRACLE IN THE MIND: THE CONQUEST OF SUPERSTITION

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I

I BEGIN writing this chapter on Friday, the 13th day of December. Interesting indeed would be the revelations that would come if one could look into the minds of a hundred and twenty million Americans on this day. Many people will breathe a bit easier when it is over. Women will not cut out a dress for fear it will all go wrong, and many of our so-called intelligent citizens will not take a journey or begin an auto trip on this particular day. Few of our hotels have room Number 13. They are just naturally not popular. Many a traveler to-night will sleep in an upper berth rather than go to bed in lower 13. A million happy experiences will go unrecorded; but let one disaster arise and it will be attributed to the malevolent machinations that made the 13th fall on Friday of the month nearest to 13! So tenaciously do we hold on to a hallucination that still survives from the childhood of the race.

That this belief, often sly and admitted only under pressure, is characteristic of all classes of our society is indicated by a study made by H. Addington Bruce[1] several years ago. He tested the faculty of Harvard University on the point of belief in one or more forms of superstition. The survey revealed that 73.4 per cent of the professors and assistants in the departments of history, philosophy, and psychology admitted that belief in some form or other of superstitious notion affected at times their conduct. Surely there is strange potency in the common fear that can link a plantation negro passing a graveyard at night and a Harvard professor who knocks on wood when he thinks he has been a bit boastful.

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[1] See *Outlook,* Vol. 98, p. 998.

Most of these weird and fantastic notions find themselves in their origin closely related to religion. Our primitive ancestors dwelt in a world of fear. They were surrounded on every hand with hostile forces in nature which they could not understand and could only with difficulty placate. In "This Believing World" Lewis Browne relates how "in the beginning there was fear; and fear was in the heart of man; and fear controlled man. At every turn it whelmed over him, leaving him no moment of ease. . . . Earth and sea and sky were set against him; with relentless enmity, with inexplicable hate, they were bent on his destruction. At least, so primitive man concluded. . . . He could not give himself stoical courage with the thought that much of the evil that occurred might be accidental. He could not so much as conceive of the accidental. No, so far as his poor dull pate could read the riddle, all things that occurred were full of meaning, were *intentional.* The bowlder that fell and crushed his shoulder had *wanted* to fall and crush it. Of course! . . . The spear of heaven-fire that had turned his squaw to cinders had consciously tried to do that very thing. Obviously! . . ."[2]

To the original man all things were animate. A spirit dwelt in them and this spirit must be punished or placated if life was to be endurable. We still have the lingering notion in our modern mind when we curse the rug that trips us up, or exclaim when the baby bumps its head against the table: "Bad table; bump baby's head!" Slowly men decided that physical violence against such animate-inanimate objects was not sufficient. The blow they struck on the offending rock rebounded on their own hand. And so they invented the magic of strange syllables and signs and lucky charms. Some spell would turn the trick and the hounds of the pursuing divinity would be called off his luckless trail. And so fetishism grew up to help man in his struggle against an unfriendly universe. The savage would find a pebble with a strange marking or manufacture an amulet to hang on his person. With these potent fetishes around his neck or over the door of his hut, the simple man was no longer afraid of the evil spirits and felt himself quite in possession of the necessary strength and safety. These fetishes finally developed into images of the god and idolatry is born in the life of the race.

Superstition has thus dogged the footsteps of religion at every stage of its advance. The story of civilization may at last be told in man's enlarging conquest of the domain of fear and the increasing substitution of reason and faith for superstition and credulity. We do not need to turn to the Old Testament to discover Saul in the cave of the witch of Endor or witness the conflict between the religion of magic and the power of righteousness. Nor need we linger in the shadow-lands of medievalism to find the power of weird religious superstition upon the minds and spirits of men. We have it to-day in the religion so-called of the twentieth century. A man is not saved unless he is baptized in a certain way by a man belonging to a certain sect; an unbaptized infant goes to perdition; prayer is wasted unless it ends with the magic phrase, "in Jesus' name"; a bishop is not a bishop until he is made the recipient of a peculiar grace by the imposition of another bishop's hands; dipping one's finger in "holy water" and making certain signs in front of one's chest has peculiar efficacy; sprinkling scented water and mumbling unintelligible Latin words over a dead body has some effect somewhere, somehow; kissing the worn toe of an image of St. Peter brings a blessing; the words of a priest, whose moral and spiritual life is at this point a matter of indifference, spoken over a wafer and a chalice of wine transforms these elements into the actual, corporeal body and blood of Jesus; a chain prayer, "originating in Flanders field," must go around the world three times; if copied and sent to nine others brings a blessing but if not copied, look out for the fourth day when some calamity will befall the man who broke the chain; a mercenarily motived evangelist announces himself as a "faith healer" and the pathetic crowds of simple folk follow his bizarre evangelism until his "psychology" wears out and his clever egotism becomes insufferable and he folds his tent and steals away between suns to fatten on less sophisticated fields of labor; two hundred thousand people in one day visit the tomb of a humble priest in the United States of America, dead, lo, these hundred years, because somebody claims that to touch his tombstone is to be healed of every infirmity. And so on and on we might go in the disturbing recital of how magic and morals have become mixed and superstition and sense have lost their differentiating marks. Surely one more miracle is needed and that is the miracle of deliverance from the thralldom of superstitious belief and the benumbing power of meaningless magic in religion.

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[2] *Op. cit.*, pp. 27, 28. The Macmillan Company.

It is just this very miracle which we find wrought in the New Testament. The evangelists who wrote the Gospels were confronted with the supremely difficult task of narrating the life history of God moving and acting under human environment. The juxtaposition of a divine character over against a human world created a situation that could be handled only by a supreme artist in literature. As we study the artistry of the Gospels we find that it is perfect, though unconscious, and can be explained only by the supposition that these men were dwelling in the presence of Reality and simply told, with guileless naïveté, what they saw and heard. The literature of the New Testament bears upon its surface the marks of naturalness and realism. Its homely phrases, its simplicity of expression, its frank recognition and recording of lapses in moral conduct, its freedom from labored argument meant to bolster up a dubious cause, the utter absence of the marks of a mythical sense upon the part of the authors —all these go far toward stamping the literature of the early Christian movement as free from mythical extravagance and hasten the conclusion that this fact is true because these writings are the records of events and characters that moved in the white sunlight of men's gaze and not in the dim, unlighted corners of imagination where vaporous spirits play hide and seek with fictitious gods. There is nothing quite like it in literature. The Gospel authors tell the story of the Son of God and yet leave him simple and rational and real, a man with a double consciousness who never plays a double part. This can be true only because the Man himself is so radiantly natural that ungrounded myths and fables cannot persist in the sunlight of his genuineness.

Jesus himself is the best antidote for superstition in religion. If we find ourselves lost amid the traditions and theories of religion, we can always go back to Jesus and the Gospels and find truth that is so clear and understandable that we wonder why we have ever felt it necessary to go beyond it. Look at the picture of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels. No saint in the whole calendar is less distinguished by what is termed "the apparatus of religion." What we have is a true study from life, a picture of the Master as he actually lived among men. He was born of a woman under the most patently natural conditions, he grew up as any normal religious-minded youth might be expected to grow up in a devout home. In his active life he bears the marks of our humanity, and shares its common weaknesses. He is pictured "as hungry, as weary, as thirsty, as angry, as suffering, as in need of sympathy, as seeking God in prayer, as shrinking from death, as dying, as dead." And yet, in spite of this human naturalness, to each of the evangelists he was the Son of God, the Messiah, the Saviour of men with power to judge men and to save men. He heals diseases, he forgives sins, he casts out devils, he feeds the hungry, he raises the dead. The remarkable thing about all this is that we are not conscious of any conflict in his personality by reason of these varied acts and attitudes. The person of Jesus remains a unity. What he does is so consonant with what he is that his acts seem perfectly natural, even inevitable, in view of his person. "He goes through life like a kind of embodied benevolence, creating health and happiness."

His teaching lays the same large emphasis upon sanity. His words are eagerly understood by the average man. "The common people heard him gladly" because he spoke their language and lived their life. He rebuked the Pharisees because they shut the door in the face of honest seekers after truth and lost in the detours of traditionalism those who would follow them.

He talks to a sinning woman and to a leader in Israel with a persuasive naturalness that sends each of them away awed by the majesty of his words but gripped by the winsomeness of his appeal. He taught in parables that men might use the implements of imagination to dig up the treasure of his truth. There is an utter absence of the weird and mysterious in his words. He takes the common terms of life to reveal the mysteries of the spiritual world. God is a father, we are children in his household; he is our brother, we are fellow workers with him. He has gone to prepare a home for us and will come again and receive us. The duties he imposed are equally concise and intelligible. "Follow me"; "love one another"; "love your enemy"; "pray without ceasing"; feed the hungry, visit the poor, clothe the naked. So on we might go through the list of homespun virtues which Jesus insists upon as the marks of the religious man. There is no deep-veiled mystery about these ethical demands of the Master. One does not need to go to a fortune teller or necromancer or have a "revelation" or a "vision" to know what he wants a follower of his to do. He needs only to bring his intelligence to the court of his commands and the way is clear to whosoever would walk in it.

If this argument for the wholesome effect of Jesus upon the weird and superstitious in religion breaks down anywhere, it would obviously be at the point of his relation to the supernatural. Here is the border line between fact and fancy, between magic and spiritual might. Mythical miracles are commonplaces in most imaginative religious literature, and it is not to be wondered at that many modern readers approach the Gospel miracles with distinct mental reservations. And yet there is as much difference between the supernaturalism of the New Testament and the uncanny magic of apocryphal religious literature as there is between the superstitious medical practices of Africa and the down-to-date scientific method of modern medicine. Take, for example, the writings of Gregory, one of the most sagacious of the early popes. He tells in his "Four Dialogues" of how pieces of gold, fresh as from the mint, fell out of the heavens upon the priests; how floods which rose even to the roofs of churches did not enter in at the doors, though they stood open; how the arm of an executioner, raised to strike off a monk's head, remained erect and fixed, sword and all in the air, but power was restored to it on the promise never to use it against a Christian. The friars of the Middle Ages would tell how a paper of scriptural proofs which the good St. Dominic had written to confound his opponent leaped out of the fire into which it had been cast while other documents remained and were utterly consumed.

If we compare these products of the mythical faculty of man with the miracles of the Gospels, we see clearly the difference and appreciate the moral sanity and intellectual sobriety of the accounts in the New Testament. The miracles of Jesus constitute a sane supernaturalism which is actively expressive of his own inmost character. Study for a moment the restraint of Jesus in using his supernatural power. The people were constantly urging him to perform a miracle, to do a sign in their presence, but Jesus refused to appease their morbid appetite for the extraordinary. He performed no miracles where faith did not justify the act. To be possessed of such tremendous power is a moral burden to one who does not have character to balance it. There is nothing so alien to the feeling of the Gospels as the love of wonder for wonder's sake. Jesus always makes the use of miraculous power wait on moral ends.

Notice also that Jesus never uses his supernatural gift for his own comfort or protection. He will not feed himself on the mount by turning stones to bread, he will not strike his unjust accusers dumb or dead, he will not call the legions of angels that stand waiting to protect his life. He will die an untimely death rather than escape by miraculous maneuvers from the hands of his murderers. As Dr. Fairbairn says in his "Philosophy of the Christian Religion": "The miraculous acts which are ascribed to Jesus have qualities which curiously correspond to his character, or, in other words, they so duplicate and reflect it that the moral attributes which are most distinctive of him reappear in his acts. Where they seem most supernatural they most completely externalize his nature. The common quality which distinguishes them all may be described as sanity or sobriety."[3] Jesus did not rest the trustworthiness of his message upon accompanying prodigies. He definitely eschewed them even as aids to faith. "This generation seeketh after a sign, and no sign shall be given it." In these words Jesus explicitly renounces the weird and uncanny as the basis of his gospel and by every implication places the foundation of religion in rationality and intelligent faith.

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[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 332. The Macmillan Company.

II

Michael Pupin in his recent volume, "The New Reformation: From Physical to Spiritual Realities," tells the story of the discovery of the scientific mental attitude and the scientific method of inquiry. He traces its origin back to Archimedes (287-212 B.C.), whom he calls "the father of the scientific method of inquiry." There is a well-known legend of how Hero, the tyrant of Syracuse, placed before Archimedes the problem of determining how much silver there was in a crown supposed to be made of pure gold. The answer to the puzzling problem came to him while floating one day in the swimming pool of the public baths of Syracuse. "It occurred to him that floating is nothing more than balancing the weight of the body against the weight of the displaced water. That is to say, the weight of a body when submerged in water will be less than its weight in air, and the difference will be equal to the weight of the displaced volume of water." This observation led to the solution and Dr. Pupin says "the original *observation* which Archimedes made while floating in the swimming pool, his *experiment* of weighing the crown when submerged, and his *calculation* for the purpose of finding out the proportions of gold and silver in the crown, are the three separate steps in the scientific method of inquiry which he employed."[4] Here is the original pronouncement of the inducive method of discovering truth and Archimedes was one of its earliest representatives. "*The Scientific Method* is the universally adopted method of observation, experiment, and calculation." This method is the very alphabet of modern science. The scientist does not start with a dogma and wind up with a proof. He starts with an observation, passes on to an experiment, continues with a calculation which leads him to a conclusion. This conclusion is true and acceptable, not because it agrees with a preconceived dogma of scientific authority, but because it is the most reasonable hypothesis to explain a set of observed phenomena. It has been the unwillingness of the theologian to accept this approach to truth that explains in large part the age-long disagreement between theology and science. This conflict grew out of two radically different mental attitudes.

Archimedes of Syracuse died more than two hundred years before Jesus of Nazareth was born. Jesus doubtless never heard his name mentioned. And yet between the spirit of the Greek scientist and the Galilean prophet there is a strange and almost startling congruity. They both drank from the same fountain and well of truth; and if Archimedes set forth the eternal laws by which men learn the ways of God in the natural world, Jesus no less finally set down the laws by which men discover the movements of God in the human spirit. Archimedes was simply discovering the constituent laws of the universe of mind and matter, which, according to the Christian idea, were inwrought into the constitution of the world by him who created "all things . . . in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and *things invisible.*" In reverence Jesus might have also said: "Before Archimedes was, I am." All truth is one at last and finally every road of human search and struggle after truth leads to the central and originating source of all, which is the Mind of God.

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[4] *Op. cit.*, pp. 6, 7. Charles Scribner's Sons.

Jesus dared to rest the credibility of his way of life upon the result of the scientific method of inquiry. He said to men faced with the mystery of their relationship to God: *observe, experiment, calculate.* This attitude of Jesus to the data of religion is a death thrust to superstition in the realm of faith. It does away with the tyranny of dogmatism and authority in religion and sets the spirits of men free to search after and find God and eternal life by the authenticated methods of experimentation and inductive living. Let us go to the record of his life for the verifying word concerning this far-reaching conclusion.

Jesus came to inaugurate among men a new order which he called the kingdom of God. It could not be established by a divine fiat that compelled obedience. It must rather be set up on the basis of voluntary loyalties which were the spontaneous responses of human hearts to the high challenges of spiritual adventure. Jesus will not lead men blindfolded into the kingdom. They must come with open eyes and inquiring minds. His first word to men interested in his way of life is a challenge to investigation. If, he says, you would know the facts in this case: *observe.* In the opening of his ministry John and two of his disciples were watching Jesus when John exclaims, "Behold, the Lamb of God." The disciples followed him and the Master, turning, arrests them with the question, "What do you want?" In confusion and awe they stammer out, "Where are you staying?" He replies, *"Come and see."* They were not to believe that he was the Messiah because John had said so; they must find it out for themselves, on the basis of their own personal observation. No man can find Jesus by proxy and no life can rest on a second-hand faith. And this is Jesus's word to every inquiring disciple, "Come and see." Look for yourself, investigate, discover all the facts, do not make your reason blind, but bring every power of observation and analysis into play and trust yourself to your conclusions.

The same approach to truth is seen in the call of the disciples. They were raw and untrained fishermen, a cross section of Galilee's humble human stream. How was Jesus to make out of them world conquerors and flaming witnesses of the New Order? Mark tells us that "he calleth unto him whom he himself would; and they went unto him. And he appointed twelve, *that they might be with him,* and that he might send them forth to preach." Who can doubt that the first step in the spiritual equipment of these men was the privilege of observing Jesus? He lived before them the gospel he asked them to preach, and they believed it because they saw it resplendently verified in the daily life of the Teacher himself. This is the significance of the climacteric question at Cæsarea Philippi. Jesus had trusted himself to them for more than two years. In all the intimacies of personal fellowship and the varied experiences of the open road of spiritual adventuring they had with open-faced wonder looked upon this man. Then he turns upon them for the answer that had been forming in their mind through all these months. "Whom say ye that I am?" Here is God trusting the credibility of his whole person and program to the power of observation in human minds. They had come and they had seen and to them he could trust the verdict. Jesus did not impose himself upon men; he exposed himself to men.

Perhaps another illustration of this fundamental attitude of Jesus will not be out of place. The seventh chapter of Luke's Gospel records the account of the deputation that came from John the Baptist to Jesus with the question as to whether or not he was the real Messiah. "Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?" The inquiry arose out of a growing uncertainty upon the part of the restless, prison-bound forerunner. Its unambiguous directness reveals a demand for a categorical answer. Is he the Christ or not?

Send back an answer, and let it be Yes or No. All this is easily read between the lines of the incident. What does Jesus say? It would have been easy for him to have sent back a simple affirmative reply, "I am." But he does not do it. He goes on with his usual day's activities of healing and cleansing from sin and preaching the good news and then turns to the messengers of John and says, "Go and report to John what you have *seen and heard*, . . . and blessed is he who is repelled by nothing in me!"[5] Here Jesus reveals his whole approach to the inquiring mind. His kingdom rests upon observable data and not upon authoritative dicta. He trusts the intelligence of men to blaze their own way through observed facts to final personal reality. "The works that I do in my Father's name, these bear witness of me." "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not." "Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear."

The second step on the royal road to knowledge is experimentation. Archimedes followed up his observation with an experiment and it was this procedure which led to the laboratory method of arriving at truth. Jesus follows the same approach in presenting his kingdom to men. He asks them to enter upon a divine adventure with him. They are boldly challenged to put all they have into it, to "bet their life on God," to take up a cross and bear it in daily sacrifice. They can never know him unless they share the road with him and drink of the same cup. The kingdom cannot be brought in by men who will not surrender to the enterprise. The tragedy of the rich young ruler was that he was not willing to take Jesus at his word and try out the new way with him. He preferred the securities of his soft competency to the high risks of a new dedication. The way to know God is to try God's way. He dares men to put him to the test. He opposes the religionists of his day because their righteousness is theoretical and traditional rather than vital and experimential. "By their fruits ye shall know them." He does not ask men to believe in love because he tells them to; he urges them to test it out in action; love your enemies and see how it works, compare its results with hating your enemies. He does not give men set formularies for prayer. He suggests that they discover the creative energies of prayer by praying. He does not tell men who God is and try to give a definition of the Eternal. He invites every seeking soul into an adventure with himself and they come out of it believing they have found God because they "have seen Jesus." In other words, he says to all men everywhere, Try me, test me, experiment with me, put to trial in your daily life my principles of love and trust. Take me into the laboratory of your personal decisions, of your newly built home, of your business and your pleasures and put me to the test of actual daily living and see whether or not it makes a difference. "Prove me now herewith, saith Jehovah of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing." It is in the spirit of the uncompromising confidence of this prophet that Jesus calmly submits his kingdom to the acid test in the laboratory of life.

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[5] Luke 7: 22, 23, Moffatt's translation.

The third step in the process of using the scientific method is calculation. After one has observed and experimented, the final step is to reach a conclusion on the basis of the evidence. Unless this is done, all preliminary steps are futile. Jesus also demands that when the facts are all in men shall decide. They must face the alternatives of life and make a choice. "He that is not for me is against me." You cannot be a slave of mammon and a servant of God. Men do not gather figs of thistles any more than they draw right calculations from false observations. The frequent use that Jesus makes of the *a fortiori* argument reveals his insistence upon this third step in scientific inquiry. You observe the birds of the air, they are cared for and protected; you notice the lilies of the field, they sow not neither do they spin, but they are clothed in surpassing loveliness—how much more then (can you not calculate?) will your heavenly Father care for you! You will also recall the man who built his house on the sand without reasonable calculation upon the uncertainties of the weather, and the man who started to build but did not calculate the cost. He pictures on the one hand the man who, setting his hand to the plow and facing the long furrow, turns back and gives up because he cannot set over against the toil of the moment the rewards of the harvest; on the other hand he portrays the merchantman who, possessed of a number of smaller pearls, figures that one great pearl is more valuable than all the others and sells all and buys the pearl of great price. So every one who enters the kingdom of God enters it upon the calculation that it is worth the price. The Master always insists that men shall count the losses and the gains involved in his discipleship and that before they enroll they shall count the personal cost of his kingdom.

I have traced this consonance between the method of Jesus and the method of the scientist in order to reenforce two important conclusions. First, it shows very clearly that Jesus did not depend upon any hidden magic or uncanny supernaturalism to win adherents to his cause. The black bats of superstition never fly in the sunlight of his shadowless truth. "God is light, and in Him is no darkness." "In him was life; and the life was the light of men."

In the second place, this open method of the Master reveals the utter ridiculousness of attempting to array the mind of Jesus against the reverent mind of science. They do not conflict because their paths are parallel and parallel lines never cross. Jesus works according to certain fixed and discernible laws with the spiritual natures of men; the scientist works according to similar fixed and discernible laws with the material universe. Each arrives at his own destined goal according to universal laws which underlie the discovery of truth in every realm. "Physical and spiritual realities supplement each other. They are the two terminals of the same realities; one terminal residing in the human soul, and the other in the things of the external world. Here is one of the fundamental reasons why Science and Religion supplement each other. They are the two pillars of the portal through which the human soul enters the world where the divinity resides."[6] Man is both mind and matter and the universe in which he lives is both spiritual and physical. God's world is not pitched upon the theory of "sense at war with soul," but rather upon the nobler optimism of our modern poet who sings:

"Flesh is the web the soul weaves
About its too bright center,
Saying to all who enter,
'Lo, find me through these folds.
He who beholds
Or seeks with unanointed hand
My burning majesty, he may not stand.'
Even as solar spheres, whose whorls of passion
Summoned from chaos shapes for flame to wear,
So doth a consciousness within us fashion
The bodies that we bear.

Could we but strip the surface from the man,
Tear off the seeming from the enduring plan,
Such melody and magic would appear,
Such devastating beauty, as would sear
The very sight to gaze on—hush, be still!
Go now within that shrine no man has trod,
Back of the restless brain, the tense will;
Back where the engines of the pulse begin,
Back where the molten door swings in,
And the upleaping flame announces God."[7]

No, between science and dogmatic theology there may be a conflict. Indeed there cannot be other than a conflict. But between religion, as interpreted by Jesus, and science, interpreted by the reverent mind, there never can be an issue. They are both part of one world, and "God is all and in all."

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[6] Pupin, "The New Reformation." Charles Scribner's Sons.

[7] Angela Morgan. Copyright by Dodd, Mead and Company.

III

Religion rests at last upon knowledge. Its basis is revelation, not mystery. I would not underestimate the vastness of our ignorance of the world without and the world within, but our real life depends not on the things that we are ignorant of but on the things that we know. Man cannot be judged either here or in eternity for his partial knowledge of the vast scheme of things in the universe, but his final judgment rests upon the way in which he has met the responsibility imposed upon him by what he knows. "To him, therefore, that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." The difficulties that arise out of our ignorance are not in any proper sense religious difficulties. They may be theological or philosohical, but they are not religious. Dr. James Denny has put it thus forcibly: "There is only one real religious difficulty, and that is the difficulty of being religious; just as there is only one real difficulty about the word of God, the difficulty of keeping it." The way of life is as plain as a pikestaff; it is a well-beaten trail that started back beyond Galilee and runs right straight through our modern America. If men have not walked in it, it is not because they have lost their way, but because they have lost their spiritual nerve. Long, long ago the words of the lawgiver and prophet in Deuteronomy blazed that road ahead for us: "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; *but those that are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever,* that we may do all the words of this law."

Does this put a premium on ignorance? Does it mean that only a fool can enter the kingdom of heaven? God forbid. Jesus nowhere intimates that ignorance is a high stake in his Realm. In fact, it is to be seriously considered whether the whole drift of Jesus's teaching does not imply that an ignorant man cannot be a good man. We say of a man sometimes, "He's an ignorant man, but he's a *good* man." I wonder if Jesus would say that. I doubt it. Goodness implies knowledge. Ignorance implies the absence of knowledge, and "this is life eternal, *that they should know thee,* the only true God, and him whom thou didst send." There is a knowledge, to be sure, which leadeth not unto life, and there is an ignorance which counteth not against the soul when the gates of eternal life are swinging open. Let us look therefore into the kind of knowledge upon which religion rests.

I have repeatedly insisted in this discussion that Jesus rests his gospel and his cause upon knowledge and not ignorance, upon intelligent understanding, not superstitious credulity. I am willing to go so far as to say that unless Christianity can be found to harmonize with the fundamental rationalities of the universe it cannot hope to hold the loyalties of intelligent men and women. But what is knowledge and whence comes it? Is it simply the perception of the five senses and the inferences from these perceptions? So the extreme materialist would have us believe. Or is knowledge the result of the reasoning faculty in man, making all truths simply caravansaries of the mind in the endless pilgrimage of the intellect from the known into the unknown? So the rationalist would suggest. But neither answer is enough. Man is not simply an organized bundle of sense reactions, nor is he simply a thinking animal who knows not the source of his brain nor the end of his thought process. Man is a spirit and is kin to God not in his physical but in his spiritual nature. Knowledge then is not simply a matter of sense perception but of soul perception, and is the result not alone of a rationalizing process but of a venture in faith. It is because our generation has been so insensitive to the brooding presence of spiritual reality that we have been willing to plunge headlong into the soulless exploitation of a material civilization. And on the other hand, our intellectual processes in America are lethargic and cynical because we have been more interested in the search for truth than in the truth for which we have searched. We need, scholar and practical man alike, to be born again, to be born from above, that we may know with all the harmonized powers of our truest selves "the things that belong unto peace." The truth of God and God's universe is so vast and so deep and so high that only he who brings to its discovery every faculty of his total personality, body, mind, and soul, can ever hope to enter into the knowledge that passeth all understanding.

Jesus definitely depends upon this soul power in men to apprehend and further his kingdom. It rests upon knowledge, but it is knowledge that is so comprehensive that it includes the perception of spiritual realities just as keenly and even more so than the understanding of intellectual processes. He never meant it to be intellectually difficult for a man to be a disciple. Else he would never have called crude Galilean fishermen to be his chief apostles and interpreters. These early disciples were what the world called "uncultured persons and mere outsiders." That is to say, they did not belong to the intelligentsia of their time nor to the ecclesiastical hierarchy. It must not be inferred that they were ignorant men in the sense of simple-minded, but they were unlearned and mentally innocent of the current standardized forms of knowledge accepted in the synagogues and academic porches of their time. And yet it was these men to whom Jesus chose to intrust his revolutionary enterprise. And his confidence was not misplaced. It is true that early Christianity had its St. Paul, but we must not forget that the basis of Paul's theology is a Person who was mediated to him through Peter and James and John, as well as through direct revelation. These early believers knew not the "wisdom of this world," but they sounded the depths of the spiritual mind and knew the things that belong unto God.

The whole New Testament experience rests upon the premise of a spiritual apperception in man. As the body of man is akin to the outward physical universe, so the inner spirit of man is related to the all-embracing Spiritual Life around him. Jesus came to make men aware of their kinships with the spiritual world. The Word became flesh in order that our flesh might become eternal Word. He touches our humanity at its highest and most elusive point and yet at its most central and neediest spot. I have the feeling quite distinctly that we can never understand Jesus, or his life, his message, his inner spirit, his persistent purpose, until we see clearly that he was the mediator of a Spiritual Life to the dormant but eternally potential spiritual nature of mankind. This is the knowledge upon which Jesus rests his appeal. The highest faculty of the human personality is the power to perceive spiritual reality. Notice now how the whole New Testament movement rests upon this assumption.

Jesus demands faith of his followers. Faith is not credulity or a rational conclusion based upon demonstrated evidence. It is a leap of the heart, a venture of the spirit. It "means we are confident of what we hope for, convinced of what we do not see."[8] No man can understand Jesus or accept his true divine nature except "in the Holy Spirit." When Peter exclaims, "Thou art the Christ," Jesus responds, "Flesh and blood have not revealed it unto thee." He criticizes the Pharisees, not for their deeds but for their deadness of heart; the roots of their spiritual nature had been withered in the arid deserts of casuistry. He chides Nicodemus for being a teacher in Israel and knowing not the elementary laws of the spiritual life. He associates with publicans and harlots because, with all their wayward vices of the flesh, they have not quenched the spark of spiritual responsiveness hidden beneath the unseemly surface of their lives. He makes humility and love and reverence and teachableness and forgiveness the central dispositions in his New Kingdom. And they are all attitudes within the soul, and they are learned not by intellectual discipline nor ethical experimentation but by the direct tutelage of the Spirit to those who hunger and thirst after righteousness and who endure "as seeing him who is invisible."

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[8] Hebrews 11: 1, Moffatt's translation.

The same insistence upon faith as the highest kind of knowledge is the basis of Paul's interpretation of the Christian life. "Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the thing preached to save them that believe. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men. For God chose the foolish things that he might put to shame them that are wise; and God did choose the things that are not that he might bring to nought the things that are. Your faith should not stand in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God. We speak God's wisdom in a mystery, even the wisdom that hath been hidden, which God foreordained before the worlds unto our glory; which none of the rulers of this world hath known: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; but as it is written,

> Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not,
> And which entered not into the heart of man,
> Whatever things God prepared for them that love him.

But unto us God revealed them through the Spirit. Now the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged."[9]

We must not dare to think that this power to perceive spiritual realities, this higher knowledge of the seeing soul, is the peculiar possession of the New Testament writers or even of conventionally religious preachers and mystics. It is the common glory of awakened spirits in every realm of life. Emily Dickinson speaks the language in a little poem:

> "I never saw a moor,
>   I never saw the sea,
> Yet know I what the heather is like
>   And what a wave must be.
> I never talked with God,
>   I never visited in heaven,
> Yet certain am I of the spot
>   As if the chart were given."[10]

Eddington, speaking for the scientists, says: "The desire for truth so prominent in the quest of science, a reaching out of the spirit from its isolation to something beyond, a response to beauty in nature and art, an Inner Light of conviction and guidance—are these as much a part of our being as our sensitivity to sense-impressions? . . . If we claim that the experience which comes to us in our silent meetings is one of the precious elements that make up the fullness of life, I do not see how science can gainsay us: Let it pause before rushing in to apply a supposed scientific test; for such a test would go much too far, stripping away from our lives not only our religion but all our feelings which do not belong to the function of a measuring machine."[11] Our philosophers tell us the same story. Rudolf Eucken in his book, "The Meaning and Value of Life," and in most of his other writings, is the apostle of this spiritual knowledge directly and intuitively communicated to the spiritual nature of man. "It is our spiritual capacity which gives to human relationships their distinctive character." William James, our American philosopher, says in the same connection: "The unreasoned and immediate assurance is the deep thing in us, the reasoned argument is but a surface exhibition. Instinct leads, intelligence doth but follow. If a person feels the presence of a living God, . . . your critical arguments, be they never so superior, will vainly set themselves to change his faith."[12]

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[9] See 1 Corinthians, chapters 1 and 2. I have made a free grouping of related passages. The other epistles abound in the same emphasis upon spiritual knowledge.

[10] From "Chartless," by Emily Dickinson. Used by permission of the publishers, Little, Brown and Company.

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[11] "Science and the Unseen World," pp. 44, 47, 48. The Macmillan Company.

[12] "Varieties of Religious Experience," p. 74. Longmans, Green and Company.

I cannot close this argument for the knowledge that is above knowledge better than with a quotation from a recent editorial in the *British Weekly.* Rev. Wesley D. Weatherhead, writing on "Faith and Knowledge," makes an assertion and tells a story:

> There *is,* then, a knowledge which is above reason, which is not of the doubtful substance of a guess, but which is the result of the exercise of the highest faculty known to man—a faith, or intuition, if you will, that climbs where reason cannot follow, a faith of soul which soars when reason often turns back at some crevice of the mind, a glow which leaps up into a burning passionate flame. I *know.*
>
> If, then, you ask me, "How may I be certain about GOD?" I might, if I were foolish, take you through the arguments known to every theologian and labeled with the attractive titles of the Cosmological, Teleological, Ontological, and Moral. If you were still sane, you would be unconvinced.
>
> No! If you asked me that question, I would take you to a bed in the infirmary in Leeds where a girl is lying dangerously ill. She is an Honours Master of Arts of Cambridge University who refused many tempting offers and went to teach little children in a tuberculosis hospital. She has now contracted disease herself. I visited her on the day she was admitted into the hospital. I was telling her about the beautiful wrought iron lamp hanging in my church, in the front panel of which is cut out a cross with red glass behind

> the panel, and I was telling her how sometimes we turned all the other lights in the church out and sat in silent meditation, thinking of the meaning of that symbol. A few days later she was operated upon. She told me that as she went into the anæsthetic and as the drug began to take possession of her senses, the last thing she could see in her mind was that red cross, hanging in the darkened church, and that when she came out of the anæsthetic the cross still shone, and behind it and above it she saw the face of Jesus. She then added this: "I was never more certain of anything in my life."

Within the humbler limits of my own parish hardly a day passes that does not bring testimony to the radiant certainty of Christian believers who cry from beds of pain and centers of dismay:

"And in the maddening maze of things,
When tossed by storm and flood,
To one fixed ground my spirit clings,
I *know* that God is good."

It is upon this certainty, immediate, intuitive, and Spirit-born, that Jesus rests the final credibility of his truth and into the joy of this assurance that he bids the troubled souls of mankind to enter. "My sheep hear my voice."

CHAPTER IV

THE MIRACLE IN THE SPIRIT: FEAR TURNED TO JOY

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I

THE world of Jesus's day was a world of startling contrasts. Exuberant pleasures and bitter heartaches dwelt side by side in the life of the people. Rome threw the glamour of her wealth and military peace across the land. She symbolized her light-heartedness with Olympic games in the amphitheaters and her constructive political ambitions with innumerable government buildings and public works in all the cities of Palestine. The temple of Herod, strange gift of the bloody Idumean, rivaled in splendor the achievement of Solomon. In all the lands where Rome ruled there were many evidences that the gods of pleasure held a high hand in the glittering life of the empire.

But this was all on the surface. "The world was growing old," writes Mommsen, of this period of history, "and not even Cæsar could make it young again." Beneath the heart of the nation was heavy with bitter woe and restless with spiritual foreboding. The rich, of whom there were many, lorded it over the poor, of whom there was a multitude which no man cared to number. The common people were economic slaves, poorly paid and taxed beyond belief to maintain an alien domination which in their hearts they loathed. Their homes were simple to the point of bareness, their food was limited in both variety and quantity, and their whole social and economic life was under the domination of overlords who had neither the spirit of justice nor the sense of brotherhood. All this was heightened by the impotence of their religious life. Righteousness was a matter of keeping the law; keeping the law demanded knowledge of the law; this knowledge required painstaking search and study; only the rich could summon the leisure to make this study, hence the poor man had no chance to be religious and was looked down upon as a part of that herd so scornfully referred to by the Pharisee as "this multitude that know not the law." If a scribe had inadvertently touched a common man in the market place, he must instantly undergo an elaborate ceremonial cleansing and ecclesiastical fumigation. Can you imagine the heartache and spiritual depression, the blind hopelessness and woe that must have burned in the heart of the populace that looked wistfully that first day into the face of the young Galilean prophet? Could he lift their burden and turn their sorrow into joy?

It is just this transformation, this miracle in the spirits of men, that Jesus undertakes and accomplishes through his life and his teaching. No human mind can estimate the amount of sheer human joy that Jesus Christ has brought into this world. Let us study for a moment this vast joyousness that radiates from the person and ministry of our Lord. To Mary the command of the angel was, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus," because he shall save his people from their sins. His birth was attended by angel choruses bursting out in songs of rejoicing. His nativity was the signal for new hopes in the hearts of devout worshipers who had longed for the redemption and glory of Israel. Heaven crowns his baptism with God's approving voice and angels minister to him in the wilderness of his temptation. The opening announcement of his message is "good news." In fact, that is the meaning of his message. Out of the long night a star at last had appeared. "The good news of the gospel" is God's announcement that a new day has dawned over the tired and fear-ridden hearts of men.

We are standing by Jesus in the synagogue at Nazareth. He is beginning his ministry as a teacher in his home town and his home church. What will he say on this first Sabbath to his home folks? What will be the keynote of his message? He calls for the roll of Isaiah and turns to the sixty-first chapter. His countenance is lighted with a holy radiance and his voice trembles with emotion as he reads: "The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon me; because Jehovah hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the poor; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the year of Jehovah's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn, to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. . . . I will greatly rejoice in Jehovah, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with a garland, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels."

These words fairly glisten with radiance and light. Jesus is not only joyful and happy in the consciousness of his oneness with God, but he is the Spirit-chosen deliverer of men and women from the prison house of fear and the bondage of sorrow. The first note that Jesus strikes in his public ministry is a note of joy, a promise that he will give men "a garland for ashes and the oil of joy for mourning."

This promise he fulfills not only by the redemptive quality of his gospel of salvation, but also by his personal touch with sorrowing and stricken hearts. He did not hold himself aloof from common folks. He plunged into the midst of the stream of human misery and loneliness and began saving people by the touch of his life upon theirs. No Pharisee or scribe had ever done this. But he would do it because the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost. Around him is a multitude of blind and lame and sick. He never speaks impatiently although they impede his main task. There's always time to help a paralytic or cure a child. He meets the widow and restores her son; he raises the servant of the centurion, he brings Lazarus back to the hearts of Mary and Martha. "He went about doing good." What finer thing could be said of any man—or of God? He went into the homes of the poor, he exalted the generosity of the widow, he set free the scarlet captives of Satan, he rolled the burden of greed from the shoulders of Zaccheus, he took little children up in his arms. No wonder they loved him and his presence was pure delight. I am not surprised that when the ancient artists painted the picture of Jesus they always put around him an aureola of light. No wonder that eight hundred years of rolling time still find us singing Bernard of Clairvaux's immortal lines:

"Jesus, thou Joy of loving hearts!
 Thou Fount of life! Thou Light of men!
From the best bliss that earth imparts,
 We turn unfilled to thee again."

Not only was Jesus the dispenser of human happiness in all his personal contacts, but he consistently preached the gospel of joy as the privilege of every believer in his way of life. He brought into the world a power the possession of which dispelled gloom and conquered fear. So conspicuous was this joyful attitude to life that the Pharisees criticized him for his exuberance of spirit. He justifies refraining from fasting upon the part of his disciples by suggesting that he and his friends were on a kind of continuous honeymoon and that the sons of the bridechamber could not be expected to show aught but joy while he was in their midst. Jesus has been pictured as a "pale

Galilean," but the description is a libel. He was the personification of strength and healthy-mindedness. Not even sorrow could take away his joy. In the face of his impending death, when all his life enterprise seems crashing in ruins at his feet, he turns to his dearest friends and says: "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full." As he moved among men he was always saying to them, "Be of good cheer." "In the world ye have tribulation: *but be of good cheer;* I have overcome the world." You remember the item printed in a Boston newspaper once: "The day was dark and gloomy, but Phillips Brooks walked down through Newspaper Row and all was bright." And so it was with the Master of the great preacher. He spread the radiance of an exhaustless good will wherever he went, and darkness fled out of human hearts and gray skies turned to noonday splendor.

No less remarkable was the infectious quality of Jesus's joy. The disciples found his secret and lived the same radiant life that their Lord and Master had led. They "took the joy of Christ with both hands till it trickled through their fingers, as it were, in a golden shower that irradiated the gloom of Rome, paled the tinsel of Athenian light-heartedness with its luster, and touched the fringes of the barbarian world with the glow of deathless hope."[1] They refuse to pine and complain when Jesus is taken away from them, but "take their food with gladness and with singleness of heart, praising God." If they suffer hardship and beating, they go their way "rejoicing that they are counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name." They sing songs in jail; they face the bitterest and cruelest opposition, and over all the sadness of their outward earthly state they sing, "Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say, Rejoice." There is sober truth in the words of Dr. Fosdick: "The New Testament is the most joyful book in the world. It opens with joy over the birth of Jesus; it ends with a superb picture of a multitude which no man can number, singing Hallelujah Choruses. No matter where you open it, amid fortunate or discouraging circumstances, you always hear the note of joy. There is enough tragedy in the New Testament to make it the saddest book in the world, and instead it is the joyfulest."[2]

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[1] E. Herman, "The Touch of God," p. 65. Doubleday, Doran and Company.

II

Joy is the medicine of God. It is given to us for our healing. It is like the sunshine that drives shadows and mists away and falls upon and opens the folded petals of the rose. Joy is vital. In its presence the mind works clearly, the spirit rises up to resist evil, and we conquer temptation. There is serious peril in despondency. Gloom presages failure and a heavy heart is an open invitation for the Evil One. Joy has been built into human life by the Creator himself. He who has made the stars to sing together has put every day a new song into our mouth. There is joy upon the earth because there is "joy in heaven." "Even so, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God." And our human joy is an emanation from the Eternal Joy that dwells in the Father God. To make that joy the accepted portion of every son of God was the kindly purpose of Jesus. "I am come that they may have life, and may have it abundantly." Joy, deep and unfailing, is the heritage of every one who has accepted Christ.

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[2] "The Manhood of the Master," pp. 9, 10. Association Press.

But fear rules the world. Everywhere men are gripped by it. It hovers over the life of the individual as a dark and awesome specter. It determines attitudes and actions upon the part of nations and races of people. The world is armed to its teeth and loaded with unbelievable financial burdens because it is afraid—afraid of what may happen. Fear still grips us in every realm of life. Basil King in the opening chapter of his striking book, "The Conquest of Fear," makes this interesting confession: "When I say that during most of my life I have been the prey of fear, I take it I am expressing the case of most people. I cannot remember a time when a dread of one kind or another was not in the air. In childhood it was the fear of going to bed, later it was the fear of school, still later it was the experience of waking in the morning with a feeling of dismay at the amount of work that had to be done before night. In some form or other fear dogs every one of us. The mother is afraid for her children, the father is afraid for his business, most of us are afraid for our job. There is not a home or an office or a school or a church, in which some hang-dog apprehension is not eating at the heart of the people who go in and out. I am ready to guess that all the miseries wrought by sin and sickness combined would not equal those we bring on ourselves through fear. We are not sick all the time. We are not sinning all the time. But most of us are always afraid—afraid of something or somebody."

Can fear be conquered? Can the joyousness of Jesus overcome the dismay of the human spirit? Is it possible that this miracle of grace can happen by which our human hearts can be set free from the harassing anxieties that beset us, and we can live our days in the unruffled possession of the joy of the Lord? It is even so, and we do not need to look beyond the New Testament to prove it. On its pages the secret is told and to this study we now turn our wistful thought.

Jesus conquered fear by bringing to men a totally new conception of God as a loving Father. The Old Testament used the name Father only seven times to describe God. In most of these instances he is thought of as father of the nation of Israel. In the New Testament, on the other hand, God is spoken of as Father two hundred and sixty-five times! In the search for some human designation that would carry to his listeners the fullest and most accurate suggestion of what God was like, Jesus chose the word *father*. "God is your heavenly Father" is his word to the perennial question as to who God is and what he is like. Now this paternal idea of God is a commonplace of our thinking. In fact, we are so familiar with the phrase that we are in danger of losing its deepest and ever-renewed significance. It means that God has for his children love, intelligent solicitude, willingness to share, care for material goods, interest in spiritual values; for all these marks, and others, characterize the true parent. Take the best human example we know of a good father and it is only a faint suggestion of the infinite goodness of our heavenly Father.

Why should we be afraid if we are the children of our Father God? The other day I heard a six-year-old boy recite with great gusto a little poem called "I'm Not Afraid." He went on to tell about being pursued by a giant with three heads and by forty ghosts all at one time, but he was not scared a bit because when they came after him he "jumped in bed with daddy." Here was a safe haven by his father's side from every threatening specter of the night. The sense of security in this child heart is suggestive of that higher calm that comes to every troubled breast when safety and peace are found in the Father's love. "This is my Father's world."

The sense of God's protecting fatherhood relieves the believer of all anxiety for the material life. Be not anxiously concerned for food, or drink, or raiment. Leave such faithless solicitude to outsiders who know not a Father's love. "*Your* heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things," and how bountifully he has made provision for our every material want. There is bread enough and to spare, and if any of God's children go hungry it is because some one has dealt unfairly with his neighbor. God never built a world in which any little child need ever go to bed hungry. We have spoiled his fair and fatherly world with our unbrotherliness and greed.

We have largely lost the value of this providing care of God because we have been so constantly multiplying the demands of our outward life. We are crazed with the desire for things. Jesus does not promise us that God will give us every whim and fancy of our carnal imagination. He does not promise us wealth or delicate and infinitely varied raiment and food, but he does promise that we shall be cared for with life's essentials if we trust ourselves to his providential care and order our lives upon the principles of his kingdom. The heart of the Psalmist's word is still true: "I have been young, but now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." The complexities of our civilization have made us confuse luxuries with necessities and place upon a long-suffering Providence responsibility for human disappointments when such responsibility rests with our own shortsighted selfishness rather than with the gracious will of God.

Jesus's idea of God sheds radiance over human life because it exalts the worth and dignity of the individual. Each of us has a separate and singular place in the universe. God does not think of mankind *en masse.* He thinks and deals in terms of individuality and personality. Jesus sets this forth convincingly in his parable of the lost sheep. God is the good shepherd who counts his sheep one by one and goes out upon the storm-swept hills to find "his sheep that was lost." With all our emphasis upon mass thinking —all thinking the same thing at the same time—and upon mass production and mass distribution we find it hard to keep alive the significance of the single individual making up the total mass. But all these schemes eventuate at last in an individual article at an individual store. Ford cars may be manufactured at the rate of many thousands a day, but at last it is one individual that buys every car on the installment plan and one driver that steers every automobile, with or without help from the back seat. The unit is still the person and not the crowd. And it is only this basal fact, constantly reasserting itself in life, that keeps our synthetic civilization from wholesale despair.

The doctrine that God notices and cares for the individual is not easy from many standpoints. Scientific agnosticism and agnostic materialism combine to depersonalize the universe and exalt blind Force as the ruthless *deus ex machina* which crushes the individual and laughs at the simplicity of a mind that could believe that

> "Not one life shall be destroyed
> Or cast as rubbish to the void
> When God hath made the pile complete."

Force, omnipotent and blind, moves like a vast Juggernaut across the fair plain of our life, crushing man and beast alike back into the earth from which they both sprang. The world moves on to an eternal night with not a single star and the moon sets in blood over the débris of a universe in ruins. Man has been described as "only a temporary chemical episode on a juvenile planet," hence "only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built." It is the seepage from this intellectual corruption into the blood stream of our present-day thinking that has made sick the soul of our generation.

Over against the stark pessimism of the modern materialist I place the quiet affirmation of Jesus. The Force back of this vibrant world is personal not mechanical, is intelligent not blind, is loving not ruthless and unmoral. The hand at the helm in the storm is my Father's hand, the face behind the cloud is "that one Face," the voice that rings out in the night of my doubt and despair is the Voice of him who came to his troubled disciples in their peril and fear and said, "It is I, be not afraid." The morning cometh and the light breaks and the shadows flee. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward. For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. . . . It is Christ Jesus . . . who is at the right hand of God, who maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? . . . I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." The ancient apostle may be wrong and the modern materialist may be right, but as for me, I would rather be wrong with St. Paul than right with Bertrand Russell!

"And Thou, O Lord! by whom are seen
Thy creatures as they be,
Forgive me if too close I lean
My human heart on Thee!"

When we thus bring the vastness of this cosmic God down into the intimacies of our own personal life, we find that experience validates theology and that the Creator of the universe becomes the Father of our own firesides. He walks with us along the Emmaus way. This is a common experience of our life. "And they constrained him, saying, Abide with us; for it is toward evening, and the day is now far spent. And he went in to abide with them. And it came to pass, when he sat down with them to meat, he took the bread and blessed; and breaking it he gave to them." And so he has visited our human abodes and brought the joy of his conscious presence to rest by our hearthstones. He has taught us that our daily food comes from his hand, that our human loves are founded upon his love, that our children are his children as well, and that only as we recognize the binding authority of his heart upon our hearts can we ever build a home, that temple of the Eternal in the midst of time. The joy we have rests in the freedom of sonship in our Father's love. "God dealeth with you as with sons."

In the second place, *Jesus delivered men from fear by centering life's supreme values in spiritual reality rather than in physical and material possessions.* Joy is an inward spring. Its sources are in the heart and not in the pocketbook. "For a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth," but rather in those attitudes of soul which possess him. The people whom Jesus counts happy are those who are ruled by an inner spirit which he describes in the Sermon on the Mount. They are the poor in spirit, the meek, the merciful, the God-hungry, and the lovers of peace. It is folks like these who shall be comforted, inherit the earth, obtain mercy, see God, and be called the sons of God.

Jesus lived this kind of life himself. His whole earthly career was one protest against the cluttering power of mere things. He had no home, no wealth, no human organization, on personal backing, and yet he was the most radiant soul that ever walked the pathways of men. He had that joy that no man could take away. Although for our sake he became poor, think of the boundless wealth that was his daily portion. He had unbroken, cloudless fellowship with God. He knew the thrill of seeing lame limbs walk and blind eyes see. All the people who did God's will were his brethren. He had a home in the heart of a little child where no jealousy or unselfishness had ever entered. He wiped clean the slate of men's transgressions and covered with love a multitude of sins. He knew the exquisite beauty of sacrificial pain, he "who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame." And all this wealth he has promised to his followers. "Greater works than these shall ye do." "All things are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."

But what shall we say to pain and suffering? Can Jesus dispel the gloom that settles down upon the human soul in the midnight of sorrow? Can his power and grace turn our pain into a pæan and our night of weeping into a morning of rejoicing? Is this miracle too much to expect of the Galilean?

Nothing can be gained by trying to dodge the issue. Evil, dark and menacing, is present in this world. Its gaunt shadow has fallen across our thresholds, and every individual grown to adulthood has at some time looked up into the heavens from a bed of pain or an open grave and cried, "My God, *why?*" Suffering and misery and pain and evil are woven into the texture of our life. They may or may not have been in the original pattern of the Master Weaver, but the somber threads are not missing in the final product of the loom of life. Nor will it help us much to theorize about the origin of evil and try to explain its presence in human life. All the philosophies of pain have some truth in them. From Job to Mary Baker Eddy they have all pierced the gloom at one point or another. But half-truths are sometimes more confusing than they are revealing, and to solve a problem intellectually is not necessarily to conquer it spiritually. Dr. Jowett makes this interesting confession at the end of a long and tender ministry: "In the early days of my ministry I used to tell people who were in trouble that there was a reason for their suffering and through it God was seeking to discipline and develop them. But as I grew older I became less confident. Now I simply say I do not understand." And his experience is the experience of all who deal with souls and sorrow. Sooner or later the riddle of suffering baffles us.

The only answer I know is the answer that Jesus gives. And this answer is not couched in the terms of some intellectual formula, but is revealed in his whole spiritual attitude to the complex problem of living. Jesus gives us a Way and his Way may become our way.

Jesus solved the problem of suffering *by facing it.* He found it at every stage of his career and he did not evade it. He marched through life "breast forward." He knew that life held a cross. He met is first head on in the temptation in the wilderness. Here he chose it rather than the easy way. A life without struggle and disappointment was offered him, but he deliberately turned aside to walk in the hard, bitter road that led to Calvary. He who would wear a crown on his head must carry a cross in his heart. Through dumbness of spirit and vacillation of devotion on the part of his intimate friends and the desertion of the multitude that "went no more with him," he moved with chastened but unyielding joy from Nazareth to Golgotha. No man could rob him of his inner peace. We shall not conquer pain by denying its existence. The mind has some effect upon the body and a stoical philosophy may dry up for the time being the springs of emotion, but even the mental attitude wavers in the presence of a thumping toothache and pent-up feelings break forth with the fury of bitter waters too long dammed up. The logic of Christian Science would close every hospital, every clinic, every sanatorium. It would prohibit the study or the amelioration of diphtheria and cancer and tuberculosis. It would banish all sickness and sorrow by denying its existence. "The material universe and the physical body are mistakes; we are as spiritual entities safely lost in a fathomless sea of infinite and beneficent Mind, and if we but rest our weary selves upon this realization, we become spiritual and lose the sense of pain and error."[3] With this kind of religious legerdemain Jesus has no patience. He did not philosophize evil out of life and, ostrich-like, act as though it did not exist. He faced it with all the moral energy of his soul and conquered it with the implements of spiritual warfare. "In me ye may have peace. In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." With this assurance we may face life confident that our sorrow shall be turned into joy. "Son of man, stand upon thy feet."

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[3] Ferguson, "The Confusion of Tongues," p. 205. Doubleday, Page and Company.

In this same chapter of John's Gospel Jesus gives the second step in the solution of life's enigmas. "I am not alone, because the Father is with me." Jesus overcomes the grief and sorrow of life *by keeping alive the spiritual sense of God's presence.* This explains his constant retreat to prayer. Here he was building defenses against threatening evil and temptation. When life became too involved and the strain too intense he refreshed himself in the quiet solitude of prayer. The cross was won in the garden of prayer. We are baffled and outdone in the turmoil of our lives because we do not have this continuous and revivifying sense of God's immediate presence. It is loneliness that defeats men, the sense of being cut off from help, stranded in an impossible situation. There are no impossible situations for men if God is consciously near. His very presence insures a way to victory. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it." The Psalmist has found the same truth and answer to the taunt of a cruel world.

"I keep the Eternal at all times before me;
With him so close, I cannot fail.

. . . .

Thou wilt reveal the path to life
To the full joy of thy presence,
To the bliss of being close to thee forever." [4]

Further, Jesus conquers evil and sorrow *by the mastery of love.* His loving attitude to men and the world around him made it impossible for sorrow and disappointment to invade his spirit. His answer to the heartbreaking dullness of his disciples was to love them "unto the uttermost." His feelings no one can describe when he heard Peter deny that he ever knew him, but he baptized his disappointment with a love that gave the wayward disciple another chance. "Lovest thou me?" He came unto his own, and his own received him not; but he was willing to give his life for the very nation that rejected him. His enemies tracked him, dogged his trail, accused him of blasphemy, cast him out socially, trapped him in a death trap, mocked him, spat upon him, reviled him, beat him with many stripes, condemned him to death on perjured testimony, crucified him between two thieves, and yet—they never broke his good will. In the very hour of his supreme and final agony, he cries with a heart bleeding from a broken love, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Here is love's final victory over hate and evil. What can you do with a man that loves as this man loves? You cannot reach him. He stands impregnable in the majesty of goodness.

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[4] Psalm 16, Moffatt's translation.

> "Majestic sweetness sits enthroned
> Upon the Saviour's brow;
> His head with radiant glories crowned,
> His lips with grace o'erflow."

Our way out of sorrow is along the road of love. If we can keep on loving, loving even our enemies, no sorrow can overwhelm us and no misfortune defeat us. Love is a fire which burns out the underbrush of suspicion and fear; love is a flame in whose light the pathway to peace grows luminous and clear. "Love never fails."

Jesus conquered fear in the life of the world, in the last place, *by his quiet confidence in the outcome of the spiritual enterprise.* Fear always grips men when they cannot see the way out. Men who live in blind alleys always tremble. If we cannot be assured that there is a goal worthy of the struggle, then we faint with discouragement. Specters of to-morrow's evil rise up before us and chide us with the futility of to-day's effort.

Nothing contributes to man's peace and happiness more than the sense of living within the will of God. If he can feel that there is "a Destiny that shapes our ends," he can feel that he is not venturing on a trackless desert, but along pathways of divine purpose. In illustration, let us look at the life of St. Paul. How different from his own planning! Every road in which he walked was a strange roadway to his own early purpose. But from the day when he met Jesus on the Damascus road and cried, "What wilt *thou* have me to do?" there were no strange or wearisome pathways; but like an embodied joy he journeyed, preached, suffered, testified in blood, and finished his course with gladness. And through the tangled skein of his life ran this silver thread of light, "Paul an apostle of Christ Jesus, through the will of God." Thus does Jesus rescue men from the oppressive sense of life's futility. He undergirds them with the will of God. He draws the circle of his own purposes around the footprints of our days

> "And I smile to think God's greatness flows around our incompleteness—
> Round our restlessness, his rest."

All men who have dared to submit their will to the divine Will have known this joy. Jesus said, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me." Paul declares of himself and his companions: "We also rejoice in our tribulations." David Livingstone, after his terrible sufferings in Africa, said: "I never made a sacrifice in my life." Wilfred Grenfell closes his book, "What Christ Means to Me," with this meaningful confession: "The faith in Christ upon which I have based my life has given me a light on life's meaning which has satisfied my mind, body, and soul. The hope that through this faith he would reveal a way of life here which justifies it has been more than answered. . . . That the Love which has made itself conscious to me through forty-odd years, and has not failed even when I failed, should desert me when in the presence of God I shall need it most, is to me unthinkable." Browning speaks for all dedicated souls who rejoice to live in the will of God when he says:

> "Let one more attest,
> I have lived, seen God's hand through a lifetime,
> And all was for best."

But man cannot be content to achieve personal triumph in a universe doomed to defeat. Our victory of to-day must be a part of the crowning victory of tomorrow. Jesus confidently looked forward to the outcome of the whole process that we call cosmic life. The road might be high and hard and difficult, but it was always up. His statement that he had overcome the world was based on a sober knowledge of all the facts in the case. He previsioned the overthrow of evil. "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." Evil is self-destroying. It has in it the seeds of death. It is an intruder in God's fair world, and the omnipotent God and Father will not abdicate the throne of the universe to a tyrant born of man's disobedience. A world enterprise in which God has invested his only begotten Son and for which that Son poured out the last drop of his bleeding sacrifice cannot in eternal justice end in wreckage and despair. Else God is crushed by the machine he has created and man is trapped like a wild animal in the snare of a world which reveals neither moral purpose nor ultimate worth. The materialist figures the length of time before the sun's heat will cool and the earth become one vast cemetery of ice-bound humanity. All hope crushed, all life gone, all magnanimity and culture forgotten, men snarl at one another on the battle field of the last standing ground of the urge to live. It is the triumph of the beast within us which wins to-day only to lose to-morrow. The spiritualist, on the other hand, believes that what we are witnessing and participating in is a drama of eternal life, the evolution of God's ageless purpose for man; that life's principles are at root spiritual and are therefore amenable to neither decay nor vengeful wrath. Heaven is possible over there because it is actual over here. This is the victory of the angel within us which loses to-day only to win in God's to-morrow.

> "We men of earth have here the stuff
> Of Paradise—We have enough!
> We need no other stones to build
> The stairs into the Unfulfilled—
> No other ivory for the doors—
> No other marble for the floors—
> No other cedar for the beam
> And dome of man's immortal dream
> Here on the paths of every-day—
> Here on the common human way—
> Is all the busy gods would take
> To build a Heaven, to mold and make
> New Edens. Ours the task sublime
> To build eternity in time."[5]

[5] Copyright by Edwin Markham and used by permission.

III

A keen but friendly critic from abroad recently said of us, "The Americans are the happiest people on earth." I wonder if we really are! Is the statement merely relative, suggesting that all the other nations are staggering from the shock of the war and we alone go unscathed in our light-heartedness? Is our happiness here in America brought about by a fortunate combination of kindly providences, or are we in fact a superior people who have made the great discovery of the enduring secrets of true bliss? Surely nature and fortune have been good to us. We are rich and smart and secure. We spend money like water, build houses fit for kings, dress like peacocks, and eat all day and night. We spend enough on tobacco to run an ordinary European government. There is one automobile for every six of us, and all the other five ride in the sixth man's car. We pour a golden stream of wealth every day across the glass counters of the palaces of the moving picture industry. Our most popular national idols are the queens of the silver sheet and the faultlessly attired buffoons of Hollywood. Our women spend enough money on beauty parlors in an average year to feed every hungry child in America. We have more leisure time than any people in the world and we spend much of our energies trying to keep from getting tired of doing nothing. "We are going nowhere at sixty miles an hour." Boredom is our chief disease and we are frantically rushing hither and yon seeking amusement and pleasure.

There is something pathetic about these surging tides of happiness hunters. They feel that they have happiness coming to them and they are out to find it. They come from the mansions of millionaires and from humble and uninspiring apartments, usually from homes of discord and cultural barrenness. Their souls are crying out for beauty and society offers them the bizarre extravagance of a moving picture theater; there is rhythm in their bodies and only the cabaret to give an answer; there is love yearning for expression and only the vapid second-hand love-making of the screen to satisfy their craving. All the songs are written to appease artificially that which our machine-driven age makes so impossible to its children—namely, the hunger for joyous, care-free happiness. Our popular melodies yodel and simper their way along telling about blue birds, and blue skies, and rainbows around their shoulders, and little love cottages where the roses bloom and the sun forever shines on the cooing, confectionary couple who married and lived happy ever afterwards. Well, maybe and maybe not—but that's another story, and we must not expect too much of our young people! Here they are, the children of our pleasure-loving age, who spend their "earnings on what never satisfies." They were created for joy and the abundant life, but they are finding only the ephemeral entertainment of an age that commercializes their God-given hunger for art and beauty and harmony and love.

Jesus seems strangely out of line with all this mad hunt for pleasure. The children of this world would regard him as a joy killer to-day. His idea of what constitutes happiness would not make good reading in *Smart Set*. His approach to what is worth while in life is diametrically opposite to that of the society devotee. The worldling seeks happiness as a goal worthy in itself. Jesus seeks character as the goal, and happiness is always a by-product. If a man seeks the kingdom first, then all else will come; but if he seeks all else, the kingdom can never reach his soul. The law of happiness is built into the structure of the moral universe just as the law of gravity is built into the physical universe. We can no more with impunity violate one than we can the other. Let him who would find deep, abiding, expanding joy linger in the radiant circle of the Galilean's life and teachings. Here he will find the secret. Joy comes through work. Harness your own personal life force to the mightier Force that moves toward the higher life of mankind. Invest your life in some enterprise that worthily meets a fundamental human need and then labor at your task as a fellow worker together with God. Joy comes through worship. Bring your spirit into communion with the Great Spirit, rest your mind in a wise passivity, be still and listen, touch the border of His garment in nature and kneel open-hearted and humbly sincere before some shrine where his presence is wont to dwell, and the quiet streams of joy will flow from beneath the throne into your own spirit. Joy comes through service. Forget yourself and think of another's woe, walk through the night with some lonely heart and leave not until you have given a blessing, grow steady by standing "on shadowed thresholds dark with fears," turn not your face away

"From tender childhood's helplessness,
From woman's grief, man's burdened toil,"

but with all the strength and grace that is given you look up and lift up and love always, and joy shall be yours, joy as unquenchable as the springs of eternal life.

Religion was meant to be joyous. It was always so in Jesus's mind. He never thought of it as dolorous or somber. He warns his disciples that when they fast they are not, like the hypocrites, to be of a sad countenance. He took religion into the open air and let the sunlight shine on it. His gospel was a deliverance from sin, from fear, from cant, from formalism. These are all breeders of misery. He set men free to approach God simply, directly, as a child comes unafraid to its father. He shook loose from men's shoulders the clinging shrouds of traditionalism. He brought religion out of the past and made it a present reality for every generation. He delivered the believer from the bondage of the letter into the liberty of the spirit. And the whole New Testament rings with this sense of joy. The contagious quality of the Master's joyousness is reflected in the disciples. They took their food with gladness. They suffer with a smile and even when persecuted they can still "rejoice and be exceeding glad." Overflowing radiance and gladness crown the New Testament from the opening angel song to the closing Hallelujah Chorus. Dr. L. P. Jacks has caught this spirit in one of his stirring lectures: "Christianity is the most encouraging, the most joyous, the least repressive, and the least forbidding of all the religions of mankind. There is no religion which throws off the burden of life so completely, which escapes so swiftly from sad moods, which gives so large a scope for the high spirits of the soul, and welcomes to its bosom with so warm an embrace those things of beauty which are a joy forever."[6]

We need to recapture this lost radiance. Our faith has become too much a duty and too little a joyous experience. Christianity is forever drifting back into a set of rules and a code of conduct. It was this error that made Paul cry out, "O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me?" Religion is a spirit in the heart of man. And the fruits of the spirit are love, joy, peace, and all the rest. When once the spirit is liberated in the human heart, its creative, joyous energy takes full possession of all the being, repressing nothing, but "transfiguring everything till all our motives and desires are akindled and aglow with the fires and energies of that central flame with its love, its peace, its joy."

This is the miracle which Jesus has wrought. He has given men deathless joy, joy that cannot be conquered by circumstance or time, but stands resplendent even in the shadows of death. And this joy and peace belong to all who behold his face and share with him the religion of the spirit.

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[6] "The Lost Radiance of the Christian Religion," pp. 9, 10. Doubleday, Page and Company.

"Thou hidden Source of calm repose,
  Thou all-sufficient Love divine,
My help and refuge from my foes,
  Secure I am while thou art mine:
And lo! from sin, and grief, and shame,
I hide me, Jesus, in thy name.

Jesus, my all in all thou art;
  My rest in toil, my ease in pain;
The medicine of my broken heart;
  In war my peace; in loss my gain;
My smile beneath the tyrant's frown;
In shame my glory and my crown.

In want my plentiful supply;
  In weakness my almighty power;
In bonds my perfect liberty;
  My light in Satan's darkest hour;
In grief my joy unspeakable;
My life in death—my all in all."

CHAPTER V

THE MIRACLE IN REDEMPTION: THE DYNAMIC OF LOVE

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I

THE best definition of God is the briefest: God is love. When we comprehend all that is implied in this short description of the Eternal, we have come a long way on the road to knowing the mind and heart of God. This is the master key to the house of understanding. It unlocks the door of his wisdom and his power and his purpose, and ushers us into the very center of his being. The discovery that the heart of God is love has been a long, slow evolution in the life of the race, and it was not until Jesus came and manifested God as our heavenly Father that we finally came to know him as he really is in his true nature. If Jesus had not lifted the veil from the face of God, we should still be groping in the dark, seeking to find him and understand him in the twilight of revelation.

This does not mean that there was a time when God was not love. Jesus did not alter the character of God; he revealed it. I shall not soon forget the struggle that went on in my mind and soul when as a theological student I confronted certain passages in the Old Testament. Here I had a picture of God drawn in terms of military might and arbitrary power. I saw him inclosed within the narrowing limits of an ancient nationalism and racialism that shocked me. I saw his hands red with the blood of alien peoples. I saw him pictured as more interested in the sacrifice of rams and goats than in the incense of human hearts. I saw him conceived with all the crudity of an anthropomorphism that took away his universal character and made him a kind of deified human potentate. I knew that there were other pictures of him in striking contrast with these. By the side of the imprecatory Psalms I read the shepherd Psalm. Blended with the harsh notes of the book of Kings, I found the tender strains of Isaiah. The ritualism of Leviticus was side by side with the stirring individualism of Jeremiah. What was I to think? Were there two Gods in the olden times? If so, which was I to choose or could I worship both? I was not helped much by my teachers. They understood the problem, but were hesitant to break up my inherited ideas too suddenly and rudely. They gave us a suggestion and here and there led us out into the theory of an unfolding revelation, but left us largely to work it out for ourselves. That was probably best. I do not need to detail the steps by which we came to accept the modern view of the Bible. Even now I feel a sense of intellectual chagrin when I think of the theological and literary subterfuges in which I vainly sought to rest my disturbed mind. What I was trying to do was to cut from the scant cloth of traditionalism a garment adequate for my present-day spiritual requirements. It was impossible. I had to choose. Upon the alternative rested the integrity of my thought life and eventually my moral life. I had to choose between a literalism in interpretation or a dualism in the nature of God. I must lose the Bible I had inherited or the God I needed. You know that a rational man confronted with that dread dilemma can do but one thing, hold on to God.

Jesus solved the problem. I began to read the Old Testament in the light of the New. I found it was better to begin at the end and work back than begin at the beginning and work forward. Since then I have always believed that the best introduction to the study of the Old Testament is an understanding of the spirit of the New Testament. The intellectual route from Jesus to Moses is much shorter than from Moses to Jesus. When I met Jesus Christ on the pages of the Synoptic Gospel, I said, Here is a God worthy of all that I could ever hope or dream that God could be. I could not want God to be better than Jesus. And when I heard him say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" and "I and the Father are one," I believed then that in the face of Jesus Christ I had seen shining the glory of God and in his voice I had heard the same tones that spoke in the morning of creation crying, "Let there be light." And dawn came into my soul.

God is one. His goodness is timeless. His love is eternal. The writer of Hebrews speaks of Jesus as "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." This can be said of Jesus because it is true of God the Father. In all the shifting transitions of human change God remains forever the same. He is the one fixed center of the universe. "In him is no variableness, neither shadow that is cast by turning." His love is not static and mechanical, but personal and spiritual; not an attribute, but an essence. The one luminous spot in all the world of man's thinking is the spiritual certainty that God is good—not only that he is good, but that he always has been good and always will be good. If men have not understood this in the past and have pictured him as jealous and vengeful and provincial, we can attribute their distorted view to the weaknesses of spiritual adolescence. And it was because of the partial and limited understanding of God which prevailed that Jesus came to bring the fullness of a revelation that had been given to men only in part. "Many were the forms and fashions in which God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets, but in these days at the end he has spoken to us by a Son—a Son whom he appointed heir of the universe, as it was by him that he created the world. He, reflecting God's bright glory and stamped with God's own character, sustains the universe with his word of power."[1] And so, in the search for God and the knowledge of his nature, Jesus is the last word. Indeed he is the eternal Word.

The incarnation of Jesus Christ in human life is the central fact of all time and history. It is the heart of Christianity. It is the groundwork upon which is built the structure of the atonement and the resurrection. Greater than his death and resurrection must always be the initial fact of his life which made all else possible and inevitable. The supreme act of God's love was in giving Jesus Christ to the world, and the words of the golden text of the Bible must never grow commonplace and trite: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Here we have the whole story of salvation in one verse. God lays bare his heart of love in the person of his eternal Son. The desire to create, to build, to redeem, to perfect is the moving passion in the life of God. The long story of the kings and prophets of ancient Israel is but the panorama of his changeless devotion to the moral and spiritual upbuilding of the race. The parable of the wicked husbandmen shows that Jesus had this long-vistaed conception of God's love. He had tried everything in vain—"surely they will reverence my Son." And so he sends Jesus to show that divine love will hesitate at no sacrifice to reveal its power and appeal to wayward and disobedient children. In the beginning was Love and love never failed.

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[1] Hebrews 1: 1-3, Moffatt's translation.

Jesus was the human embodiment of this passion in the heart of God. He is an eternal flashlight of God's broken heart. He reveals God's love because he is an incarnation of it. All that was in God was found in him. "In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." If we believe that God was in Christ, we can never again doubt the fundamental goodness of the universe. We stand amazed at the love of Jesus. It humbles us and charms us. It cleanses us with a holy fire. It redeems us from littleness and selfishness. It lifts us on eagle wings to new heights of aspiration. It is forever before us a flying goal, and before its perfection our hearts rest in reverent silence. Some mysteries lie too deep for words and to describe them is to lose their charm and reality. Deep calls unto deep, and upon the sensitive register of our inmost spirit there is recorded the authentic and infallible sign of that deeper spiritual kinship of love which binds the heart of the eternal God to the wistful children of eternity. "We love because he first loved us."

"O Love! O Life! Our faith and sight
Thy presence maketh one,
As through transfigured clouds of white
We trace the noonday sun.

So, to our mortal eyes subdued,
Flesh-veiled, but not concealed,
We know in thee the fatherhood
And heart of God revealed." [2]

The love of Christ may forever remain a strange fact of solemnizing and humbling mystery, we may not understand its height nor depth, but we can trace its glorifying touch upon these human lives of ours. Blessed are the eyes which see Jesus, who "is the image of the Invisible God."

II

Sin is the price we have paid for the freedom of the human will. God gave us the right to choose and through all the ages men have used that free volition not only to honor but also to affront and deny the God who created them. But we cannot think of God making other than a free universe. There can be no intelligence or love or growth or Godlikeness if freedom is denied. Only a God of infinite patience and unwearying love would ever have dared to enter upon the high adventure of creating a world of free moral agents capable of defying the Creator and scuttling the universe. Sin has always been the problem of God. The crown he wears has always been a crown of thorns.

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[2] Whittier, "Our Master."

But it has been no less the problem of man. From the day when Cain, confronted by the penalty of his evil doing, cried out, "My punishment is greater than I can bear," the wail of desolated hearts has gone up to a merciful God. There has never been a single page of human history that does not carry this heart cry. "Have mercy upon me, O God, have mercy upon me!" is the poignant cry of our humanity confronted by its weakness and waywardness. The cry has come not only from the world's great sinners, but from its saints as well. "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." Paul counted himself "the chief of sinners" and St. Ambrose, in the fourth century, declares: "I have nothing whereof I may glory in my works; I will therefore glory in Christ. I will not glory because I am righteous, but because I am redeemed; not because I am clear of sin, but because my sins are forgiven." The saintly Bishop Heber prayed shortly before his death: "O my Father, my Master, my Saviour, and my King, unworthy and wicked as I am, reject me not as a polluted vessel, but so quicken me by Thy spirit from the death of sin that I may walk in newness of life before Thee." Sensitiveness to sin has always been one of the characteristics of the truly Christian heart.

Our present generation has been making strenuous but futile efforts to get rid of the sense of sin. We tend everywhere to a monstrous egotism. We are so sure that we are superior and dominant with our strident Americanism that we do not like to admit that we may be sinners as well. We worship the god of efficiency and he will brook no admission of failure. We do not fear God, we fear an inferiority complex. We are salesmen and our first job is to sell ourselves. Hence we cover up our weaknesses with fine clothes and fair speech. We live in a high-powered, artificial world of commercialism and showmanship, and throttle as long as we can the impulse toward humility and self-confession. There may have been a day when the meek might have inherited the earth, but that day is certainly not now and to-day our world is the spoil of dominant personalities energized by blatant self-sufficiency. So runs far too often the legend of our present-day acquisitive society.

And much of modern philosophy gets us no farther. Man's sin is the result of inherited tendencies that should have been corrected much earlier. The criminal simply did not choose the right kind of grand-father. Or there is a malformation in the brain structure and this once remedied moral growth becomes inevitable. Behaviorism leaves little room for the penitent heart. Our crude naturalism identifies man with God in such a manner as to make the sense of sin irrelevant and unthinkable. I cannot make this wayward drift in our modern world clearer than to quote the convincing words of Albert Parker Fitch, late of Amherst College: "We have lost the sense of communion with Absolute Being and of the obligation to standards higher than those of the world, which that communion brings. Out of this identification of man with nature has come the preaching which ignores the fact of sin; which reduces free will and moral responsibility of the individual to the vanishing point; which stresses the control of the forces of inheritance and environment to the edge of fatalistic determinism; which leads man to regard himself as unfortunate rather than reprehensible when moral disaster overtakes him; which induces that condoning of the moral rebel which is born not of love for the sinner but of indifference to his sin; which issues in that last degeneration of self-pity in which individuals and societies alike indulge; and in that repellent sentimentality over vice and crime which beflowers the murderer while it forgets its victim, which turns to ouija boards and levitated tables to obscure the solemn finality of death and to glaze over the guilty secret of the battle field."[3]

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[3] "Preaching and Paganism," p. 132. Yale University Press.

We cannot escape, however, from the facts of life. Disguise it as we may, philosophize about it as best we can, sin is here. Its naked, stark realism stares us in the face at every turn. Men and women are distraught and unhappy, conscience still makes cowards of us all, homes are wrecked, hearts are broken, virtue is outraged, liberty is turned to license, God is defied and defamed by his children. We need not ask with Faust, "Where is that place which men call 'Hell'?" Nor wait for Mephistopheles to answer,

> "Hell is in no set place, nor is it circumscribed,
> For where we are—is Hell!"

In the first century Paul wrote the classic description of the "carnal mind." "And even as they refused to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up unto a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, hateful to God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, unmerciful." (Rom. 1:28-31.) We can escape from the terrifying pessimism of these words only by believing that they characterize the Græco-Roman world of nineteen hundred years ago and that they do not any longer describe us in this advanced stage of civilization. A glance at the front page of a metropolitan daily on any day in the year will probably rudely shake us from our fool's paradise. Underneath the mask of our light-hearted modern world still hides the devilish face of unredeemed human nature. Sin is still our greatest personal and social problem. Man needs to be redeemed, and no veneer of modernity can long conceal this desperate and fundamental need of a Saviour.

I recall one never-to-be-forgotten evening in midsummer at Lake Junaluska in North Carolina. I was returning along by the shore of the lake walking toward the Mission Building. Darkness was falling from the surrounding mountains upon the quiet bosom of the waters beside me. In the far distance storm clouds had gathered and great thunderheads, black and menacing, rolled up on the horizon at the far end of the lake. As I watched them coming with darkening intensity suddenly there flashed on a high hill before me the emblazoned cross that we all know so well. I had seen it lighted before; it always impressed me, but it never impressed me as it did that summer night when it became a luminous spot silhouetted against the black background of threatening thunderclouds. The clouds served but to bring out more sharply and impressively the outlines of the cross. We never quite understand the love of God until we see it against the background of sin. Forgiveness shines with new glories when men recall the hopelessness of the far country and the bleak and starless night when they knew not God.

Every age has this wonder of forgiving love in its heart. We stand to repeat our creed and in its center is this declaration, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins." Men in every generation have cried, "Can I be cleansed? Is there a balm for my troubled conscience? How can I get right with God and my fellow men?" There is an answer. The love of God in Christ meets the need of man. His sins can be forgiven, his record cleared, his heart regenerated, and his whole nature cleansed and renewed. He may become a new man by the power of love. Forgiveness thus becomes the central fact of religious experience. The greatest miracle that God can perform for us is in the name of Jesus Christ to forgive our sins. The wonder of it, the mystery of it never departs. We cannot figure out how the Righteous One can forgive the unrighteous, but we know that it is a part of our common lot and experience. "It is the breaking of eternity into time, the intervention of a love beyond all measures, a supernatural event not deducible by any human calculus from the nature of the universe, but rather the spontaneous and unanalyzable deed of God."[4]

It is not surprising that so stupendous a fact has staggered the finite minds of men until they have been guilty of the most weird and fantastic theories of how God could forgive sins. Perhaps it might be said that at the heart of our faith—namely, the atonement—there has been most confusion. Surely here we cannot retrace these distressing misunderstandings of the nature of redemption. We might well let them remain in the archives of the past for historical study. They mark the history of dogma and reveal how far we have come in the understanding of God since the days that gave them birth. Certain great facts, however, stand out for our enlightenment and encouragement. We can never again believe in any theory of the atonement that makes God less good than Jesus, yea, even less good than an earthly father. We can never believe that God is more concerned about the integrity of his governmental majesty than he is about the love of his subjects. We can never believe that an angry God had to be reconciled and placated in order to be willing to forgive. We can never believe in the righteousness of a universe in which one man can take upon himself, as a substitute, the guilt of another man who goes free. There can be no transference of moral responsibility from one shoulder to another, even though one of those shoulders be his who bore a cross on Calvary. We must certainly by this time have been delivered from the crassness of Old Testament symbolism that teaches that it is the literal blood which brings redemption. To quote that well-known passage, "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins," and insist that it is to be taken in all its crude literalness is so egregiously to misinterpret the spiritual quality of God's love as to mark us children of Nicodemus rather than the sons of God. We may rejoice with exceeding great joy that we are not rescued from sin by any theory of the atonement, but we are saved by grace, "and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God." "Ideas of sacrifice, atonement, expiation, ransom, substitution, and propitiation reflect phases of human life and experience, and they all have their place in an accredited interpretation of the gospel. But they must not be literalized, materialized, legalized, and depersonalized. Their significance is inner and spiritual. Their formulation in language is essentially poetical and figurative."[5]

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[4] Macintosh, "The Christian Experience of Forgiveness," p. 35. Harper and Brothers.

If we cannot rest in these partial and confusing theories of the atonement, is there a simple fact, or group of facts, which can be made intelligible to a modern man? If a young person comes to me with the question, "What must I do to be saved?" what shall I tell him? I cannot talk to him about Grotius and Anselm; he is not interested in the blood of sacrifices; he is utterly incapable of making fine theological distinctions. He wants reality, rescue from sin, power over his temptations, richness of spiritual life, communion with God. How can he get them? I must answer him in terms that he can understand. If he is honestly seeking light, I shall ask him to follow with me through five simple steps, as I seek to translate into modern terms the way of salvation.

First, *it is the love of God that saves us.* Love is the redemptive process in the universe. It is the active principle in the heart of God. God *is* love. It was his love that brought the children of Israel out of Egypt. It was his love that made a covenant with them through Moses. It was his love that kept that covenant even when they broke their faith with him. It was his love that pleaded through poet and priest and prophet that they should turn away from their unrighteousness and seek his face. "I have formed thee; thou art my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me. I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee," is the word in Isaiah. In Jeremiah we meet the same note: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." It is everywhere, on every page.

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[5] Davies, "The Gospel of the Living Jesus," p. 179. The Macmillan Company.

And this love, like all redemptive love, pays the price in suffering. Love always costs. Teardrops and heartaches are no strangers to God. Away with these pictures of God as seated on a throne of majesty in unperturbed aloofness. He is down among us, wooing us with his loving spirit, yearning over our dullness and ingratitude, ever holding out his hand, his wounded hand, to receive us sinful men. There has always been a cross in the heart of the Eternal. Love knows no other way to redeem except by the way of the cross. "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. . . . But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." So, here is our first fact of salvation. We are saved by the love of God.

The second step is equally clear. *Love in its highest* *form always expresses itself in a person.* In fact, love is always a relationship between persons. God was through all the ages successively revealing himself to men through spirit-filled and love-enthralled personalities. The right of Moses and David and Isaiah and Ezekiel to lead the people rested upon the measure in which they impersonated the yearning love of God for his children. They were, however, but broken lights at best. There must be a full, supreme, and finally perfect manifestation of God's love if we are ever to understand adequately how much he cares for us. And so the Father God came to dwell for a while on earth in Jesus. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." "Herein is the love of God manifested in us, that God sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him." In Jesus we saw what God had always been. In him "God manifested his love toward us." The abstract became the concrete, the nebulous became the luminous, the eternal became a point in time. God the everlasting, the omniscient, the omnipotent, the all-loving was in Jesus, and we beheld his glory perfectly revealed in the lineament of a human face and in the deathless fidelity of our Galilean brother. If you ever doubt God, look at Jesus and then look back again into the Father's face and you will understand.

There is a third step. It bears on the question of sin. *How can God forgive the sinner and not thereby seem to be indifferent to the sin he has committed?* What can God do with the sin that lies back in my past when I come to him for forgiveness and newness of life? God is not technically concerned with the sins that have already been committed. He is concerned with our present attitude to him and our present desire to enter into life through fellowship with Christ. It is nearer to the truth to say that God forgives the sinner rather than the sin. It is inverted and mechanical to fix our thoughts on the sins of the past instead of upon the sinner who has committed them. God can have but one attitude to sin, and that is hatred; he can have but one attitude to the sinner, and that is love. Sins can never be completely atoned for. A new life in God may help to undo some of the penalty of the past and cut off some of its entail of evil, but to say that forgiveness can make the past as though it had never been is simply to say something that we all know is not true. And it is not moral but selfish for us, once we have been regenerated, to be indifferent to a past life of sin that has left its damage and wreckage in human hearts that we have touched for evil. We ought to seek the grace of God to help us heal and restore those whom we have wounded.

Let us see how Jesus forgave people. Take the instance, in the seventh chapter of Luke, of the sinful woman who broke the alabaster cruse of ointment upon him and bathed his feet with her tears. She was a "sinner," so adjudged by all. Jesus looked into her heart and found it broken. The teardrops came from the deep springs of trembling penitence. She spoke no word, she asked no boon, she signed no contract, she simply loved him with a love that only a scarlet soul can know when it yearns deeply and desperately for a cleansed heart and a new road into purity of life. Instantly Jesus says to her, "Thy sins are forgiven." Why? Because she "loved much." Her love opened the way for God's love to remove her transgressions from her "as far as the east is from the west." The closing experience in the dramatic story of the prodigal son reveals the same attitude on God's part. The father does not go back into the prodigal's past. The boy is received again into the father's home, not because he has not been a sinner, but because love has been born in his heart and he has a new attitude to life. Or take still another striking illustration. Jesus confronts Peter on the shore of the Sea of Galilee after the resurrection. Peter had denied him and forsaken him and fled. In one terrifying moment he had thrown overboard his whole cargo of experience and faith. What did Jesus say to him there on the shore by the fire? The silence of the Master is even more eloquent than his utterance. Never a word about the past. Only the present and the future. "Lovest thou me?" "Feed my sheep." I think Dr. Borden P. Bowne has put this matter so clearly that each of us may understand it: "In all this the aim is not to satisfy the demands of justice, nor yet to save men from penalty, but to save men from sinning, to lift them Godward, and to bring to them that spiritual attitude which will make it possible for God to bestow himself upon them in infinite and eternal blessing. It is not a problem in forensic technicalities, but in spiritual dynamics. Love has no difficulty with the problem and only love can solve it."[6]

But the average man confronts me next with a question. *"What about the cross and what is the meaning of the death of Jesus in relation to my personal salvation?"* He has been frankly confused at this point by the imagery and symbolism that gather around the experience of Calvary. The answer ought not to be difficult. Jesus has nothing to say, either before or after his resurrection, about the sacrificial or expiatory character of his death as separate from his life. The fact is, he saved men and women from their sins before he died on the cross. His death on Calvary was the inevitable and inescapable result of his life. He felt its shadow from the beginning. He could have avoided it at any time he chose. But if he had escaped from it he would have been forced to give up his redemptive task. His birth and life and ministry and death are all integral parts of a unity in personality that could not be broken either by his own will or the will of men. We must not bisect the life of Jesus and tear apart the seamless robe of his sacrificial mission. This does not mean that the cross is not supreme. Here on this fateful hill converged all the demoniacal forces that had separately plagued and tormented his pathway. Here spiritual blindness and political chicanery played their last card. In the crucible of that experience were mixed the dull cowardice of the disciples, the treachery of the son of perdition, the cold-blooded faithlessness of the Pharisees, the stupid vacillation of the multitude, the cringing weakness of Pilate, the cynical bitterness of the high priest, the humiliation of the Roman rabble, the tears of his mother, the cruel thrusts of pain and insatiable thirst, the unspeakable agony of a moment of God-forsaken loneliness. All this was in the cup that he drank. The cross dramatizes for us in unforgettable lines the love of God that dwelt in Jesus Christ. You will recall that Franz Liszt at the close of his wonderful life writes: "I am writing this on the date of September 14, 1860, when the church celebrates the elevation of the Holy Cross. The voice of this feast also expresses the ardent and mysterious emotion which, like a sacred stigmata, has transpierced my entire life. Yes, Jesus Christ crucified, the madness and the elevation of the Cross, this was my true vocation." And "the madness and the elevation of the cross" so reveal the timeless and unchanging love of a God that spared not his own life that we cannot think of Jesus except as "Christ crucified."

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[6] "Studies in Christianity," pp. 172 and 168. Houghton Mifflin Company.

And now I am ready to say to my friend what is perhaps the most important word of all. *Fellowship with Christ is the simple way of obtaining conscious salvation.* Salvation is not something magical or mechanical, but something inner and experiential and, at last, intensely practical. We are saved by the indwelling of Christ in our hearts, by the coming into our spirits of his life-giving Spirit. This life spirit of Jesus becomes the life-element of our spirits. "Salvation is the free gift of God in Christ Jesus." (Rom. 6: 23.) Paul says: "I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me." (Gal. 2: 20.) Look at Romans 5: 10: "For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, *shall we be saved in his life.*" "Saved *in* his life." The preposition is most significant because "it proves that the apostle meant that we are saved through participating in his life, not by his life as something operating independently of us."[7] When we are "in Christ," we are new creatures.

What is it then that saves us? We are saved by the grace of God through spiritual union with him in Christ. We are saved when, led by his spirit, we participate in Christ's life and open our hearts to the mastery of his spirit. "We awake to the amazing realization that Reality is not far off, unknown and unknowable; that Jesus is not some vaguely recognized abstraction which may be acknowledged and then put out of one's mind, but that God is Jesus, walking still among us men, hearing us pray, blessing us in sacraments, our compassionate friend, touched with every feeling of our infirmities, but at the same time God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God."[8] So we may come through the avenue of his welcoming friendship into the joy of sins forgiven and the abundant love of the Father's heart.

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[7] Workman, "Jesus the Man and Christ the Spirit," Chapter X. The Macmillan Company

III

Through all the ages God has been seeking to teach us one supreme lesson, that love is the redemptive force in life. Without love life is dead. Every true value of human life rests in love as its ultimate basis and authority.

"The night has a thousand eyes,
  And the day but one;
Yet the light of the bright world dies
  With the dying sun.

The mind has a thousand eyes,
  And the heart but one;
Yet the light of a whole life dies
  When love is done."

Love is still "the greatest thing in the world." Life is just one long chance to learn to love, and those who learn enter into life eternal and those who learn not go away into outer darkness.

The infinite passion that burned in the heart of God when he loved his people with an everlasting love is found in equal force and splendor in Jesus Christ. Here love reached its *n*th power. "He loved them unto the uttermost." And this same holy affection has moved and inspired men and women from the beginning of time until this present hour. There is a daily crucifixion in every street and at the end of every road a cross. Pain and suffering are ever the price we pay for every advance toward the light.

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[8] Bell, "Beyond Agnosticism," p. 76. Harper and Brothers.

Take the realm of science. Practically every new discovery in the field of medicine has been purchased for us with human blood. Illustrations are so numerous as to confuse and startle us. Not long ago Dr. Howard Maxwell Lefroy was suffocated in his laboratory in London experimenting with an antidote for the deadly Lewisite gas. In 1928 Dr. Hideyo Noguchi, the world-famous Japanese bacteriologist, died in a fever-stricken seaport on the Gold Coast of Africa, a victim of African yellow fever, the cause of which he had just discovered as a result of studying his own case. "Gas Kills Noted Surgeon." Buried in the news columns a few months ago appeared that heading, with a brief announcement of the death, in Manchester, England, of Dr. Sidney Rawson Wilson, distinguished surgeon and anæsthetist. No blaring headlines; only the short statement that the doctor's wife, entering his laboratory, found him with a mask over his face, lying before a machine which administered gas mixtures. Yet between the lines was the heroic story of a martyr of modern science—one of many men who have sacrificed themselves to advance knowledge and mitigate human suffering. For years Doctor Wilson had experimented with anæsthetics to develop one which would prolong that "border" state in which a patient, though losing all feeling, still retains consciousness. Success seemed at hand. The only way thoroughly to test his results was to experiment on himself. He adjusted the gas mask over his face—and died. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

Or take the great spiritual adventurers of the world. St. Paul, driven from city to city, cast out and stoned and left for dead, traduced by his countrymen, deserted by his friends, in shipwreck and prison, beaten with many stripes, yet rejoicing that he could prove himself "a true minister of God by great endurance, by suffering, by troubles, by calamities." The secret of it was no morbid self-mortification. It was the love of Christ and the love of his brethren, for whose sake he would willingly be accursed, that constrained him and drove him on to the end in an unwearying ardor to preach a crucified and living Redeemer.

Stand a moment in the spiritual presence of Francis Asbury, prophet of the long road and father of American Methodism. He literally poured out his heart's blood for the souls of our pioneer forefathers. "In this labor," he writes in his Journal, "we have to encounter hunger, heat, and many restless nights with mosquitoes, unwholesome provisions, and bad water; but all this is for souls; were it for silver I would require a great sum." During his life as a bishop he traveled on horseback or in a carriage two hundred and seventy thousand miles, preached sixteen thousand sermons, ordained four thousand ministers, and sat as president of two hundred and twenty-four Annual Conferences. Small wonder that President Coolidge in unveiling a monument to his memory says, "He is entitled to rank as one of the builders of our nation."

A few months ago a unique and remarkable event happened in Tokyo. The Emperor of Japan gave a public audience to Evangeline Booth, the Commander of the Salvation Army in America. And as he passed out of the stately audience room, in the presence of a throng of attachés and functionaries, the Emperor *saluted* the Commander of the Salvation Army! The first time a woman had ever been thus received and the first time the Emperor had ever saluted anyone! Even the worldly mind stands at attention in the presence of love's authority. These are the dauntless, daring souls that have put the sheer power of love up against the world's bitter woe and made hope to spring triumphant in those condemned to spiritual death.

When I was a young man just entering upon my ministry there came across my path a man of God in whom I recognized in remarkable measure the spirit of Christ. It was Walter R. Lambuth, missionary secretary, bishop of the Methodist Church against his will, physician of the bodies and souls of men, world citizen, humble follower of Jesus Christ. He heralded the love of God on every continent of our globe. Never has a more sacrificial soul labored in our midst to "fill up the measure of the suffering of Christ." Under the handicap of intense physical suffering, bidding farewell to his beloved wife and home, he set sail on his last journey to the Orient. It was a pathway of pain that led to the gates of death. The sands of life were running low, but there was one more conquest to which love drove him. Manchuria and Russia must know the lure of Christ. With pathetic but inspiring courage, he said shortly before his death: "I realize that I am making my last trip to the Orient. But I have had a part in the founding of the missions in Japan and Africa, and now I will feel satisfied if I can lay the foundation of this work in Siberia and Manchuria. The doctors told me not to come, but I want to found this mission first, then I will be satisfied." And love did not fail and will not fail as long as a church can respond to the heroism of such a challenge!

"Pour out thy love like the rush of a river,
  Wasting its waters forever and ever,
Through the burnt sands that reward not the giver;
  Silent or songful thou nearest the sea."

This is still our gospel—the gospel of a loving and suffering God. What God was in Christ, he is in eternity. What Jesus was in the first century, he will be in the last. He is the Alpha and the Omega. The plan of redemption and the way of salvation have not changed in nineteen hundred years and will not need to change until we all stand in his presence with exceeding joy. There is just one way to win the world and that is to love it back to life. God started out on that high enterprise "before the foundation of the world." He has never wearied or turned aside. Jesus knew his secret and followed in the same path in which his Father trod. And every minister and disciple of his must redeem by the same way, the way of a daily cross of love. We must stand on Calvary until we can see it, this strange "madness and elevation" of the cross, and then we must bear our own burden of suffering for others on the heated and sand-swept deserts of human sin and sorrow. We have been bought with a price, and whatever we buy for our Lord and Master must be paid for in the same coin. It is the coin of blood. Let us not think that we to-day can save a world by our cleverness, our learning, our methods, our faultless dignity and culture. These are banal and powerless unless shot through with a sacrificial spirit that links us together in the army of those who suffer that others may reign. Only the gospel of a broken heart and only the ministry that knows sacrificial pain can redeem the crassness and paganism of our modern world.

The world has worn a smooth path across Calvary and hardly notices the cross as it hurries by on its way to temporal trivialities. But woe unto us if we lose sight of him who hung there for our redemption! For in letting his face grow dim we have lost not only our God but our gospel. We stand by his side. We touch his nail-pierced hands. We share the pain of his rejected love. We drink the same cup he drinks. "Sweet to us is the bitterness of his lips, sweet to us the salt of his tears." Jesus is still on the cross. The heart of God still loves and still suffers. Calvary and the cross are God's eternal word to sinful men. And there is no other gospel and no other Name given among men whereby we may be saved.

"How can it be that God can reign in glory,
Calmly content with what His Love has done,
Reading unmoved the piteous shameful story,
All the vile deeds men do beneath the sun?

Are there no tears in the heart of the Eternal?
Is there no pain to pierce the soul of God?
Then must He be a fiend of Hell infernal,
Beating the earth to pieces with His rod.

Father, if He, the Christ, were Thy Revealer,
Truly the First Begotten of the Lord,
Then must Thou be a Suff'rer and a Healer,
Pierced to the heart by the sorrow of the sword.

Then must it mean, not only that Thy sorrow
Smote Thee that once upon the lonely tree,
But that to-day, to-night, and on the morrow,
Still it will come, O Gallant God, to Thee.

Swift to its birth in spite of human scorning
Hastens the day the storm clouds roll apart;
Rings o'er the earth the message of the morning,
Still on the Cross the Saviour bares His heart." [9]

There is a shadow resting upon the face of God and it will never be lifted until the last one of his children comes back to his home and his heart.

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[9] Studdert Kennedy.

CHAPTER VI

THE MIRACLE IN ETHICS: THE OLD AND NEW MORALITY

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I

JESUS was a revolutionist. He was a conscious and deliberate agitator against the existing order of his day. Canon Streeter calls him "a constructive revolutionary." "Think not that I came to send peace upon the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword." His whole ministry, both in teaching and action, was one long constructive protest against "things as they are." He started out to change the thinking of men about the most fundamental aspects of life. In conformity with our usual adolescent type of thinking we have the opinion that a revolutionist to qualify as such must use physical violence. In reality physical violence is the weakest and last resort of the true revolutionist. He does his real work in the laboratory and the study. Ideas are the high explosives in the world of mankind. When Gutenberg invented the printing press, when Martin Luther nailed his theses on the church door, when the barons of England wrote the Magna Charta, when Wycliffe swore to give the Bible to every common man, when John Wesley, shut out of the pulpit of the Church of England, stood on his father's grave and preached, when Charles Darwin discovered the scientific theory of evolution, when Thomas Edison invented the electric light, when Woodrow Wilson dreamed the possibility of a League for peace—these were all revolutionists in the truest sense of the word. They brought into the life of man an idea, formative, devastating, creative, gloriously revolutionary. The world can never be the same because they lived and dreamed their dream.

It is in this sense that Jesus is a revolutionist. He has changed the structural foundations of human life by the introduction into the world of an entirely new ethic. We can never think about life again without taking him into consideration. Men forget him only to turn and find him standing in their midst searching them and judging them with his quiet eyes. He and his disciples have literally "turned the world upside down." It is true, as Paul said, the saints do judge the world. Jesus was the most audacious thinker the world has ever known. We have not overtaken him yet, and he beckons to us still from great distances ahead to follow on in the pursuit of his ideal.

There are some who claim to find nothing original in the teaching of Jesus. They insist that they can find his thought duplicated in other religious writings. It would indeed be strange and disappointing if no trace of his thought had found expression elsewhere. His claim to originality does not rest upon the solitariness of his ideas, but rather upon the strange potency with which he clothed them. They heard him with gladness because he taught them "as one having authority." "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." He did not boast of his independence of the past. No great man does. He built his truth upon the framework of the prophets and the lawgivers of Israel. He cast aside or ignored the temporal elements in their teaching and into the abiding truths he poured the energies of his new idealism. He took the scriptures of the Old Covenant with high seriousness. They were to him the inspired word upon which he fed his soul in the quietness of meditation or in the heated struggle for righteousness. But the Old Testament is not the New, and its permanent validity must be judged by its consonance with the mind and thought of Jesus. "Ye have heard it said by them of old, . . . *but I say unto you."* Here is the final word. Once again we are brought into the presence of the miracle-working Galilean, and we find him this time transforming the ethical ideals of the world into the lofty idealism of the kingdom of God.

II

The world into which Jesus came was ruled by three different conceptions of life, the Greek, the Roman, the Jewish. The earthly life of Jesus in the cosmopolitan crossroads of Palestine brought him into contact with all three of these philosophies. Their ideas were constantly playing upon him, and we cannot well understand the far-reaching significance of Jesus's teaching unless we put it over against the contemporary systems of his day. With much in some of these philosophies he must have been in deepest sympathy. It is foolishness to imagine that Jesus wished to establish an ethical ideal upon the ruins of every previous and contemporary system. He took all that was good wherever he found it, and added to it the distinctive quality of his own thought. Let us survey briefly the ways in which Jesus transcends the current philosophies of his own day.

Greece had made by far the largest contribution to the moral life of the first century. Epicureanism, Stoicism, Platonism, and Aristotelianism were and still are the four great philosophies of the pre-Christian world. There are many points at which their circles overlap the circle of Christ's teaching, but in each of them there is an element lacking which is found only in the ethical idealism of Jesus.

Epicurus was the philosopher of pleasure. Melancholy, depression, gloom, and worry are inexcusable follies, unpardonable sins. Happiness is the goal of life, and by prudently planning each day we may find ourselves immersed in joys which cannot be tempered by regrets over the past or worries concerning the future. "Let us eat, drink, and be merry." Seek pleasure and pursue it and happiness shall be your reward. Over against this ideal of life Jesus put the assertion that pleasure cannot be sought directly with success. Pleasures come unsought to those who lose themselves in great intellectual, spiritual, and social enterprises. A person is not a bundle of appetites and passions whose gratification brings the real satisfaction.

Men are spirits as well as bodies, and bodily appetites must be subservient to moral ends. Jesus took all the varied and spontaneous joys of the Epicurean and sublimated them into the higher and enduring satisfactions of unified, spirit-controlled personalities.

Stoicism presented an opposite ideal. External facts and experiences were all judged by a mind rigidly controlled by the individual. "Men are disturbed not by things, but by the view which they take of things." No man need be the victim of circumstances. He can banish misfortune or sorrow or death itself by rigidly refusing to think of them as evil, but rather as a part of the universal law which completely masters the accidents of the individual life. Fate is supreme. Although yielding himself in unconditional surrender to the fact that this is an evil world, he may yet rise to combat the flings and taunts of outrageous fortune by insisting, in the words of a modern Stoic, that his soul is "unconquerable" and his head "bloody but unbowed." Stoicism thus exalts impersonal law, "rigid, fixed, fatal, unalterable, unimprovable, uncompanionable." Mr. W. S. Gilbert has put, in lines that carry with them a touch of absurdity, the fundamental weakness of Stoical philosophy:

"Roll on, thou ball, roll on;
Through seas of inky air
Roll on.
It's true I've got no shirts to wear;
It's true my butcher's bills are due;

It's true my prospects all look blue—
But don't let that unsettle you—
Never you mind!
Roll on!"
(It rolls on.)

Against the cold, impersonal fixity of this dead law that must be obeyed, Jesus insisted that the center of this world was beneficent, personal will. Men are fellow-workers together with God and develop their personalities by coöperative good will. Evil circumstances abound, disaster and trouble are found in every life, but these can be conquered not by an impersonal fatalism but by loving God and having the mind that was in Christ. The philosophy of the Christian has all the truth of Stoicism and none of its narrowness and hardness. After listing all of life's darkest experiences, over which the Stoic claimed mastery by his mental attitude, the spokesman of the Christian philosophy of life cries: "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

Platonism is a distinct advance over the doctrines of Epicureanism and Stocism. Plato has three cardinal virtues: temperance, fortitude, and wisdom. Each of them is the authority of reason in the realm of appetite, spirit, and knowledge. Righteousness is the comprehensive virtue; it represents that subordination and coördination of all the parts of the soul in the service of the soul as a whole, includes each of the other three virtues, and comprehends them all in the unity of the soul's organic life. "Virtue is the health and beauty and well-being of the soul, vice is the disease and weakness and deformity of the soul." Upon these noble tenets Plato would educate the youth of Greece and build the New Republic. Plato was concerned with the exaltation of the ideal of righteousness and drew the picture of a world where only those who were educated and trained could attain the goal. Those who could not achieve were serf and slaves.

Jesus had the same lofty passion for righteousness that Plato had, but he did not limit its attainment to the educated and trained citizen. He opened the door to every humble man in whose heart there beat a passion for divine wisdom and truth. No humble workingman or unfortunate woman could be made a slave of the more fortunate; no child, ill-begotten and deformed, could be hurried to an untimely death for the good of the state. Every child is a child of God and every man our brother and every woman our sister. Jesus believed in a spiritual democracy in which every soul should have its chance. He took the righteousness of Plato and made it the passion of the common man.

Aristotle was the greatest of the Greeks. His philosophy approaches most nearly to the thought of Jesus. "The Aristotelian principle was the devotion of life to a worthy end and the selection of efficient means for its accomplishment." His kingdom of ends, his passion for social good, his ideal of friendship are worthy of the highest emulation. But Aristotle was a child of his generation. His philosophy was proclaimed in a city-state that was half slave, half free. Athens comprised one hundred thousand men, women, and children whose cultural life was made possible by the labors of an equal number of slaves. Only upon the hypothesis of this serf foundation could the city-state of Plato and Aristotle be built. The true doctrine of the inherent worth of every personality must await the coming of the Galilean philosopher. The kingdom of God transcends the Ideal Republic because in it the aristocracy of brains and birth is supplanted by the inclusive democracy of virtue, service, and love.

I have lingered thus at length upon these philosophies of life which ruled the Greek world of Jesus's day for two reasons. First, because in one form or another we are meeting them to-day in a new dress. Our contemporary insistence upon freedom of impulse, the modern doctrine that we have an undeniable right to personal liberty and the gratification of our own unrestrained lusts, is simply ancient Epicureanism in a new garb. Christian Science, or the supremacy of the Mind over all evil, is a rebaptized portion of Stoicism, masquerading as a new discovery. Neoplatonism and New Thought find their historical roots in Platonic philosophy, and Humanism, "the new religion," bears strange kinships with the efforts of our distant forefathers to find the supreme good. The best defense I know against the swelling tide of these modern cross currents of thought is a careful study of the history of ethics, culminating in a profound pondering of the teaching of Jesus.

The second reason is because each of these theories of the good life has something to teach us, and we shall realize the truth only when we comprehend Christianity as a synthesis of all that was good in each of them, motivated by a new dynamic, the Love of God in Jesus Christ. I quote from William DeWitt Hyde, to whose "Five Great Philosophies of Life" I am richly indebted in this chapter:

> The time is ripe for a Christianity which shall have room for all the innocent joys of sense and flesh, of mind and heart, which Epicurus taught us to prize aright, yet shall have the Stoic strength to make whatever sacrifice of them the universal good requires; which shall purge the heart of pride and pretense by questionings of motive as searching as those of Plato, and at the same time shall hold life to as strict accountability for practical usefulness and social progress as Aristotle's doctrines of the end and the means require. It is by some such world-wide, historical approach, and the inclusion of whatever elements and worth other systems have separately emphasized, that we shall reach a Christianity that is really catholic. . . .
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> Christianity of this simple vital sort is the world's salvation. Criticized by enemies and caricatured by friends: fossilized in the minds of the aged, and forced on the tongues of the immature; mingled with all manner of exploded superstition, false philosophy, science that is not so, and history that never happened; obscured

> by absurd rites; buried in incredible creeds; professed by hypocrites; discredited by sentimentalists; evaporated by mystics; stereotyped by literalists; monopolized by sacerdotalists; it has lived in spite of all the graveclothes its unbelieving disciples have tried to wrap around it, and holds the keys of eternal life.[1]

The Roman conception of life was much less involved. It was founded upon the political philosophy of the empire, the doctrine that might makes right. Superiority consisted in the possession of sufficient power to command and compel the obedience of others. It was a system in which war lords and money kings asserted rights of life and death over their subjects. Not a little suggestion of this attitude is discovered here and there in the Gospels. James and John want to sit one on the right hand and the other on the left of Jesus, from which place of vantage they could exercise authority over their fellow disciples. Their frequent discussions as to who should be first in the kingdom attest the same attitude. Jesus is quite definite in his opinion of this power philosophy. He rejects it unqualifiedly as having no place in his kingdom. In rebuking James and John he tells all the disciples: "Ye know that they who are accounted to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it is not so among you: but whosoever would be great among you, shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you, shall be servant of all." Not only does he preach the doctrine of the greatness of humble service, but he exemplifies it in his actions. Shortly before his death he performs a symbolic act which would immortalize in the memory of his friends this attitude to their fellows of which he had so often spoken. In the upper room he takes a towel and a basin and kneels and washes the feet of his disciples. The significance of the act is deeply emphasized and interpreted by the words that immediately precede the account in the thirteenth chapter of John: "Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and *that he came forth from God, and goeth unto God,* riseth from supper, . . . and began to wash the disciples' feet." It was the awareness of divine authority, of divine origin and destiny that made it perfectly natural that he should perform this so-called humble task. It was his regal consciousness that explains without apology his act of lowly service. It is this kind of person, Jesus taught, self-effacing, humble, loving, and sympathetic, that shall inherit the earth and eventually put to flight the armies of overlords who blare and strut their way across the centuries. There are some who call this the morality of slaves, of weaklings. It has not been so proved by the tribunal of the years. As the lamb has driven the lion from the field into the menagerie, so the "terrible meek" will at last overcome the power-obsessed dictators and autocrats of earth.

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[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 288, 291. The Macmillan Company.

The Roman Catholic Church became during the early centuries the embodiment of this idea of autocracy in an ecclesiasticism. With its doctrine of the primacy of Peter and its whole graded system of militarism in spiritual matters, it is built upon the same fundamental premise of the right to rule that was to be found in the Roman State. The Holy Roman Empire and the Holy Roman Catholic Church are twin brothers. A growing political democracy has made one a thing of the past, and it is a question as to how long the other can stand before the rising tide of spiritual democracy that is sweeping over the civilized world. The Pope recently spoke of the way in which the drift to Catholicism was setting in, Protestantism showing a nostalgia for the religion of authority. Our reply is that Rome has probably seen her best days and that the future will belong to the sons of spiritual freedom whose only master is Jesus Christ, and not to the devotees of papal authority whose right to rule rests upon the attenuated thread of a doubtful exegesis. "Do not be called fathers, do not be called teachers, do not be called leaders"—so Moffatt translates the familiar phrases of the New Testament. Be called servants. I lead and you follow, Jesus says. Service is the only rightful road to leadership. What Dr. Stanley Jones says of India is true of all the world, "The day of the master is gone; the day of the servant is just dawning."

With the Jewish conception of righteousness Jesus came into almost daily conflict. We are familiar with his battle with the scribes and Pharisees. This disagreement was no surface unfriendliness, but an antagonism that went down to underlying philosophies as to what constituted goodness and life itself. Herford sums up this contrast: "The conflict was one between two fundamentally different conceptions of religion—viz., that in which the supreme authority was Torah, and that in which the supreme authority was the immediate intuition of God in the individual soul and conscience. The Pharisee stood for one: Jesus stood for the other."[2] There was not room enough in the world of Jesus's day for both conceptions of life, and there is not room enough in any human heart to-day for legalism and liberty.

In the ethical system of the Pharisee the law of Moses was supreme. Obedience was an external matter of keeping those statutes handed down from the past. A righteous man was one who kept the law. An unrighteous man was one who failed to keep the law. Motives had nothing to do with it. A man who kept the law for an evil, selfish motive was better than a man who was forced to break the law for a good motive. It was better to keep the Sabbath, preserve the institution, come what may, than to further the interests of goodness and love or even to preserve life itself. With this externalism Jesus has no sympathy. The Sabbath was made for man. The institution is always subservient to the moral ends it was created to serve. To the eye of the scribe Jesus is a sinner because he ruthlessly overrides the sanctities of the law of Moses and sets up his own word as more authoritative than the utterances of the inspired lawgivers of Israel. But Jesus was not interested in destruction but in creation. He did not come to destroy, he came to fulfill. When he uses this word "fulfill" he means to "make perfect," to "bring to its consummation." The word means this frequently in the New Testament. "Jesus was guilty of no slavish subordination, no complacent veneration, no easy bibliolatry toward the Mosaic law. He recognized the law's shortcomings, its inadequacy, its externality, and set himself to complete it by substituting the inner principle. If this were made dominant in men's hearts, the law's outward demands and prohibitions would be rendered unnecessary."[3] Jesus thus puts the final authority not in a code of ethics but in an inner disposition of love. If you love God and your fellow men, you are not to be bound and ruled by the dead hand of any ancient law. You are the children of a strange rapture and walk in the glow of an inner light that need never fail. You are "not under law, but under grace."

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[2] "Phariseeism: Its Aim and Method," p. 167. The Macmillan Company.

III

The religion of the spirit does not go off into vague and formless mysticism. It has its foundation in certain great structural ideas which were enunciated by Jesus and which constitute a lasting basis for ethical morality and religion. The first of these principles is his doctrine of the *sacredness of persons.* Jesus made traditions and institutions secondary to men and women. Nothing could stand in his universe that was inimical to the best interest of mankind. This was why he hated sin; it destroyed personalities, blotted out the image of God in human life, and made the achievement of the personal goal impossible. He scorned the Pharisees because they traveled over sea and land to make one convert and then made him many times more a son of hell than before they "converted" him. It explains why he ate with publicans and sinners. He came to save lost humanity and not to conserve the petty rules of social and moral etiquette. He discovered children. No other religious teacher ever put a little child in the midst. Here was mankind's hope, their perennial opportunity to do better than their fathers. If any one puts a stumblingblock in the way of a little child, he commits the arch crime of hindering a human life. Men were the children of God, and it was his task on earth to announce that good news and thus help every man to enter into the inheritance of sonship. The kingdom of God is a kingdom not of thrones and principalities, but of men and women and little children "who obey him perfectly and receive his complete blessings."[4] The universe exists for persons, and every system of thought and every program of action must be judged at last by its effect upon the persons who are involved in it or affected by it.

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[3] Dickey, "The Constructive Revolution of Jesus," p. 60. Doubleday, Page and Company.

The second foundation of Jesus's ethical teaching is the *emphasis upon love as the central, creative disposition of the human heart.* Jesus's idea of goodness is not regularity of conduct but the whole personality of man given in love, in love to God and to his fellow man. "My religion is very simple. I love God and all my brothers," says Manson, representing Christ, in "The Servant in the House." He has truly caught the spirit of Jesus. Love is the determinative disposition in the heart of one who belongs to his kingdom. We understand in the light of this emphasis several rather unusual features about Jesus's teaching. We can see why he is indifferent regarding rules of conduct, why he never gives regulations or laws that must be obeyed. He rather cultivated the filial heart, knowing that love will need no rules to express itself. It will make its own rules and express itself according to its own spontaneous outpouring. We are children in our Father's house, and he treats us as sons and we treat him as Father. Petty rules are made for slaves, not for sons.

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[4] Branscomb, "The Message of Jesus," p. 83.

We can further understand why he condemns not the act of wrongdoing but the motive and impulse that leads to it. Murder is not the fundamental crime. It is rather the murderous disposition which precedes either the attempt or the accomplishment of the foul deed. The overt act of impurity is not the final evidence, it is the foul heart of uncleanness that despises the woman it would wrong. We can now see clearly why Jesus insisted so strongly upon forgiveness as the mark of a member of his kingdom. "If ye forgive not men their trespasses"—there can be no place for you in God's realm. We are taught to pray, "Forgive us our trespasses, *as we forgive those who trespass against us.*" There is no limit set to the number of times we are to forgive. We are always to forgive "from our hearts." This is a hard saying, it is a high road. Why this counsel of perfection? Because it is the pure in heart that see God, and if hatred and jealousy are in our hearts we cannot know and love him. All of us stand before the judgment not in our merits but in his compassionate love that gives the repentant heart a perpetual and never-closed chance to come again. This is God our Father, and if we are to be like him we must treat one another as he treats us. "So shall also my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother." This inner disposition, this spiritual attitude to oneself and to one's neighbors that we call love, thus becomes the interpretative key to all Jesus's teaching and, once put into practice, is seen to be "creation's final law."

The third underlying basis for the ethics of Jesus is his conception of man's destiny as that *of unfolding through endless growth into perfection of Godlikeness.* Many of our ancient and modern philosophies lead us to the jumping-off place and leave us there. They reveal no ultimate end in life. Jesus was always conscious of an infinite goal. "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." We have never arrived, we are always arriving. Life is an evolving struggle from the lower to the higher and then to the highest. He pulls aside the curtain and gives men a glimpse of the eternity which he has set in their hearts. Holiness is to be their goal. Complete sanctification is the privilege of every redeemed child of God. It will take time to make us in his image, but "we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." Then the beloved disciple goes on to say: "Every one that hath this hope set on him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

The term "saint" needs to be redeemed and rehabilitated in our Christian thinking. In the New Testament the word suggests what the Christian is by way of status and privilege and sets before him the goal of perfection in Christ. Every member of the Church is "called to be a saint" in the sense that his whole inner life has been changed and regenerated, and only the perfect example of Christ is high enough to challenge his ransomed powers. We need sadly in our day this passion for perfection, this hunger for holiness. "Middling cotton" is a staple article in the world, but a "middlin' Christian" is hardly standard in the kingdom of God. Early Methodism was no stranger to the experience of sanctification. Because the doctrine fell among overzealous advocates and religious casuists we turned away from our original emphasis upon personal holiness. But we need to turn back in humility and seek the cleansing of our hearts that we may "perfectly love God and worthily magnify his holy name." This serene summit of experience comes not from an assemblage of virtues; but when a new spirit is breathed into the believer by the Spirit of God and Christlikeness becomes the one ideal, which, though never attained, is never surrendered.

IV

There is something about the ethical ideal of Jesus Christ that makes his teaching always modern and commanding. Nations and individuals have striven during these nineteen hundred years to throw him overboard as so much excess baggage, but they finally come back to the inexorable necessity of dealing with him and his ideal. Russia is to-day melting up her church bells for factory uses and dismantling her churches and turning them into Soviet clubs and houses of merchandise. But even in their folly they are not reaching him; they are simply destroying that which has been a caricature of his spirit. Blindly they are struggling away from an ecclesiasticism that has concealed its Lord into an untrammeled atmosphere where they will in time be forced by the very constitution of their human need to cry out for the living God. They remind one of the remark of Dr. John Kelman that "paganism is an elaborate device to get along without the Cross." Jesus is the bread of life and men will not always go hungry. He is the water of life and men must at last slake their thirst. He is the light of the world and they that sit in darkness can but yearn for the breaking of the morning. He is the "Christ of every road."

"O Lord and Master of us all,
Whate'er our name or sign,
We own thy sway, we hear thy call,
We test our lives by thine."

Let us mention some of the points at which the ideal of Jesus is touching most acutely the customs and standards of our present-day world. I want to enter my plea, first of all, for *a religion of the spirit.* We have drifted far away from the early glow of our faith as it shone in Galilee and in the Pentecostal fires of the early Church. This is not to deny that we have made some progress at certain points, but it is to affirm that there are certain lost radiances out of our faith that we would do well to recover. The Church has not always known her Christ. We are forever tending back into the legalism from which the gospel delivered us and making the words of Christ a new law to take the place of the old Law from which we have been set free. If we can realize the inner spirit of Jesus, if we can be united with him, if he can live in us and we in him, then we are indeed the bondservants of a new law which is none other than the law of liberty, the liberty of those who know only the mind of Christ. The Church does not always bring to its communicants this inward sense of release and of union with God. It is always so much easier to rule with rules than with spiritual ideals. Men ask for God and we give them a new set of Commandments. Our preaching is ethical and didactic rather than spiritual and mystical. The gift of the Holy Spirit is a New Testament experience the preaching of which is likely to be so impersonal and unexperiential that it leaves the modern churchgoer cold and untouched. By clever publicity we gather crowds that have so little spiritual background that we despair of getting them to understand the mysteries of the soul's experience, and we are forced in the end to be satisfied with giving them an ethical application of the gospel to some social problem of the day. To do anything else is, to use a figure of Dean Inge, like trying "to fill a row of narrow-necked bottles by throwing a bucketful of water over them." The deadening effect of a materialized civilization upon the pew has reacted on the pulpit, and we are constantly tempted to walk the sea-level route of trivialities rather than climb with our people the high roads that lead to the Sinais and the Hermons of the soul.

Ritualism and extreme formalism has constantly threatened to throttle the very impulse they were meant to create. Surely none of us wants to return to the chaotic days when disorder and religious emotionalism made worship impossible. But we must also beware lest the niceties and elaborateness of our modern rituals submerge the individual and make an impression of artistic beauty that is so strong that it overwhelms the tender yearning for a personal experience of God. Worship has but one object—namely, to lead us into the conscious presence of our Father God. It is not an end in itself, it is always and only a means to a glorious end. There can be no fixed routine or chart of the soul's climb to God. For each one it is spontaneous and heaven-born. Our real business is to build altars in human hearts, altars on which the Spirit is never quenched and the fire never dies.

The religion of the spirit is beset at another point in our modern world. We are forever trying to make it an intellectual pursuit rather than a mystical experience. Now we all know that religion has to do with the mind, and that while it may transcend reason, it never contradicts reason. But we have waged a bitter battle during these last few years between modernism and fundamentalism. The tragedy of it has not been that one side has routed the other, depending of course on which side of the fence you chance to be; the tragedy is that so many of us on both sides have acted as though we thought that the religion of the spirit could be identified with our interpretation of religion. Strange that we could not catch the significance of Jesus's word when the ancient controversialists came to him to decide between the modernist Gerizim and the fundamentalist Jerusalem, and he replied to them with emphasis, "*Neither* in this mountain nor in Jerusalem." But let every man in his own way build his own altar at that spot where for him the light of heaven shines. It is strange indeed that we have so long missed the emphasis Jesus intended that this woman of Samaria and all subsequent literalists should catch when he insisted that "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth." Jesus was willing to trust the religious instinct in men much farther than we are. Religion is an inward, individual experience, an affair between the soul and God, without the interference of any human being. "When," as one of our most helpful writers has said, "religion becomes only an orthodoxy, and we enter into it by a rite instead of by an experience, it is in a perilous condition."[5] Many pretentious reputations will shrivel up in the day when the quiet eyes of Jesus rest upon them and look through them. It is hearing and doing the words of Jesus, orthodoxy in conduct as in creed, that gives life eternal stability.

Shall I speak of the perils that confront us from the dizzying activities of our modern church life? We are forever going, but we are not sure where. "Something doing every day" is our motto, and our programs of committees and meetings and suppers are never-ending. Pastors become executives and business managers. The wheels must be made to go round. We rush from one activity to another until our hectic mania tires the spirit within us and benumbs the sensibilities of our soul, and we stand in our pulpits on Sunday to preach a pragmatic gospel that has its origin in our nerves and not in our heart. We do not have time to pray, we are too driven to have a real chance to practice the cure of souls, we read skimmingly, and our thoughts are stamped with tabloid superficiality. We become echoes of dead or distant voices, and our people are expecting us to be "live wires" when most of us have lost connection with the dynamoes of spiritual power. We want to be prophets; yes, a few of us

[5] Shoemaker, "Realizing Religion," p. 66. Association Press.

would like to be mystics, but we wind up as the managing directors of a vast ecclesiastical machine.

I know of no way in which our modern church life can be saved from the deadness and sterility which threatens it except it be baptized through its leadership with a new experience of God. Could not that happen again which happened on Pentecost when tongues as it were of flame rested on each of the believers and they went out to conquer the world by the force of faith? It was eight years ago that I heard Sherwood Eddy tell a chapter out of his own spiritual life that stirred me profoundly. I have gone back and read it over at least once a year since I heard it that spring day in Dallas. I give it to you to-day because to me it represents the power for which we wait and without which we languish.

> If the reader will pardon a very personal testimony, I desire to say a word as to the reality of God in my own experience. In 1897 I came to the darkest day in my life. I had miserably failed in my own character and in my service. I was discouraged, bitter, rebellious. Somehow I had missed the mark and lost the way in life. After a sleepless night, I cried to God as my Father to show me the way out. Then in a moment, without any special emotion or excitement, one simple word received in faith changed life forever. I did not then know that it was "forever," but for twenty-five years since that day God has been the abiding reality of my life and I have no fears for the future. And this was the

word: "Anyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again; but anyone who drinks the water I shall give him *will never thirst any more;* the water I shall give him will turn into a spring of water welling up to eternal life." The waters of this earth, wealth, pleasure, power, ambition, "the lust of life" do not satisfy, for the reason that man was made for higher things. But God does satisfy, for happiness is found in the harmonious exercise of function, in full correspondence with the ultimate environment of the soul, which is God.

I thought how glorious that would be to "never thirst any more," but I could never hold out, I would forget and lose my grip as I had in the past. But then the thought came, could I trust, could I drink, could I live this way for one day? for I will never have to live but one day at a time. Yes, I said, I will try it. I will test the promise and begin to drink, living one day at a time by faith. I will endeavor to live upon God, to draw my life from him as the spiritual environment of the soul, as simply as I would drink, or eat, or breathe, in correspondence with the physical environment.

That day I began. Twenty-five years have passed, but the thirst of the former years has never come back—no, not for an hour! There has not been an hour of darkness or despair, and, I mean it literally, not an hour of discouragement. I have often failed him. I have never been satisfied with myself, or my service; I have often sinned. It would be sheer dishonesty to imply

> anything else. But he has never failed me. And he has kept his promise. He is my portion, my satisfaction, my life; for it is not what I am to him, but what he is to me, that determines life.
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> And experimentally it is in the continuous present. We drink the well once for all, as it were (the Greek tense is in the aorist), but thenceforth we drink continuously of the inward spring. It does not say, "Whosoever drank in the past," but "anyone who drinks" and keeps drinking, for just so long he "will *never thirst any more.*" This experience, or rather God himself, as revealed in Jesus, has become to me the perennial inward moral miracle, the central certainty, the daily joyous discovery of the great adventure of life. I have made an almost unbelievably poor response to this experience, but I can no more deny it or doubt God than I can doubt my own existence. Twenty-five years have passed and that joy is undimmed. And before God, I lie not. One thing I know, *he satisfies.* And such an experience is possible, for all, only varying in expression according to temperament and training. "If *any* man thirst, let him come and drink."

Here is the strange, mysterious certainty of a sou that has met God. This experience tests and evaluates all other experiences in life. This is the peace that the world can neither give, understand, nor take away. It is the central certainty of life, the soul's regal right by virtue of having been born of the Spirit and being ushered thereby into the fadeless glory of his immediate presence.

V

Perhaps never before has there been as much ethical confusion as there is to-day. We were disillusioned by the World War from much of our naïve idealism. The rapid growth of a machine civilization has brought changes that affect the very structure of our common life. Rapid and cheap transportation has broken up the isolation of the old-time home. The factories have lured boys and girls out into economic independence of their parents and given them a new freedom that they were ill prepared to control for higher ends. The startling increase in wealth and leisure time has thrown upon the modern man and woman a responsibility that is altogether new. There is no use of talking about living in pre-war times; we are children of to-day and we mean to make the most of our vivid, highly lighted, and richly furnished world. To the average modernist yesterday is dead, as dead as it will ever be; to-day is alive, as alive as he can make it. And why worry about the future?

But underneath this gay and adventurous modernity there is a deep uneasiness. Men are not sure that it is well with the soul of the age they are living in. "Much of what appears to be a tough self-sufficiency is protective: it is a brittle crust covering depths of uncertainty."[6] The old sanctities are gone. Many of them had to go. They were codified customs and laws that were supported by no eternal principles of right. But what shall take their place? It is not enough to grant to our modern youth freedom. Freedom without some moral control is like an engine without a pilot. Every new freedom demands a commensurate increase in moral responsibility or else it becomes a liability and not an asset. But they will no longer take the orthodox moralist as their guide. We cannot beat them over the head with the Ten Commandments and the moralities of the Victorian age. They are not looking for authorities they can respect; they are looking for moral goals that can challenge their souls.

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[6] Lippmann, "A Preface to Morals," p. 316. The Macmillan Company.

I believe that Jesus still offers to youth its best platform of life. The religion of Jesus is free, unconventional, daring. It was in the first century the faith of young men who dreamed dreams and saw visions. Jesus frankly threw away old binding customs and led his followers out in the liberty of a new and individual spiritual experience. He was the "pioneer," and he still invites men into an enterprise that is unfinished. The freest place in this world is by the side of Jesus Christ. He is creating a new earth, and he has a place in his daring program for every man and woman who reverences his own personality, loves his fellow man, and, refusing to rest in moral mediocrity, seeks the ultimate in personal power and goodness. When will the Church begin to think of youth as Jesus does? When that day comes the Church will capitalize rather than curb youth's enthusiasm and recognize in its immaturity its best chance to pour into the old forms of regularity and orthodoxy the new wine of a fresh ardor and buoyant expectancy. We may, however, be in the market for some new wine skins, which will not be an unmixed evil.

What about the ethics of Jesus in the market place? When one thinks of putting our modern ideas of success by the side of the spirit of the Master, a sense of "deep and piercing solemnity" comes over us. James Truslow Adams recently said: "We in America are so busy *doing* that we have no time to *be*. We have been 'doing' for three hundred years. We have cleared and settled a continent. We have accumulated the most colossal store of material power and resources the world has ever seen. Is it not time that we began to think what to do with all our means, what the end is that we wish to attain? Are we forever to continue getting more things in order to get more things with which to get more things, and so on *ad infinitum?*" This sounds like a certain Teacher that spoke in Judea and Galilee in the first century. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth." "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven!"

Jesus wages no war on riches. He does protest its unbrotherly origin, distribution, and use. Wealth is so much coined personal power. To acquire it unfairly or to use it selfishly is to sin not only against one's brother but against one's self. Wealth is not a private and personal possession. It is a stewardship from God and must be invested, as a part of one's total personality, in the enterprise of the kingdom. Not a tenth, but all of it. All that we have and are belongs to the service of the kingdom of God. Jesus would create in our grasping modern society a new standard. He would put the Golden Rule in the charter of every business enterprise in America. We have built an economic order that is founded on selfishness and not brotherhood. We have as a result vast fortunes that are used for personal pleasure rather than the social good. We pay wages that are as low as we can keep them so we can pay dividends that are as high as we can make them. There is an interesting addition to the story of the Rich Young Ruler told in the apocryphal Gospel according to the Hebrews: "But the rich young man began to scratch his head, and it did not please him. And the Lord said unto him, How do you say I have fulfilled the law and the prophets, since it is written in the law, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' and behold your many brothers, sons of Abraham, are clothed with filth and dying with hunger, and your house is full of many good things, and nothing at all goes out from it to them."[7]

If we begin to apply the principles of Jesus, the ethics of the law of love, to the present economic order, we are in for trouble. For we have but dimly appreciated his spirit and the revolutionary character of his teaching. Here lies before us, at our very doors, a battle ground on which only the hardy and adventurous need enlist. For it will try the souls of men when they undertake to transform the unbrotherly economic organization of society into a structure that shall embody his principle of love for our fellow man and the enduring and inviolable rights of every man, whether he wear overalls or broadcloth.

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[7] Quoted by Dickey in "The Constructive Revolution of Jesus," pp. 140, 141.

The remark of Nietzsche that "religion is being constantly shipwrecked on morals" was never more true than in our present quandary on the subject of sexual morality. The relationships of men and women seem to be in for a complete overhauling in our day. We do not need to explain here the causes that have led step by step to the loosening of the old standards and the general promiscuity that has followed. We are in deep confusion and we shall not solve our difficulties by appealing to external customs or even the authoritative prescriptions of religion. We shall need to examine the present drifts in sexual laxity according to certain principles of ethical conduct which have been accepted as regulative in society. Let us go back to Aristotle's principle of social ends and Jesus's principle of the sacredness of persons. Linking these two principles, which have never been superseded in any age, let us ask our modern man and woman two questions. First, do you include the sanctity of the home, the peace and purity of family life, the dignity and welfare of every man and woman, the honest birthright of every child, as a part of the social end at which you aim? If you do not, you mean that you deliberately choose the gratification of your sexual life when such excess and promiscuity mean the degradation of the partner of your dishonor and the violation of the sanctities you demand for your own wife or husband. The second question is equally pointed. Do you honestly believe that loose and promiscuous sexual relations conduce to the dignity of individual life, the sanctity of the home, and the birthright of children? If you do, you are simply a fool. The home is built on chastity. Fidelity to the marriage vow is required in even pagan communities, and to think that we can have promiscuous infidelity and still retain the sacredness of the home and the purity of marital love is egregious folly.

This does not mean that sex is evil. It means that it is a high spiritual power of coöperation with God in the cementing of love between a man and a woman and in the procreation of the race. Chastity is neither celibacy nor licentiousness. It is far deeper than either. It is the spiritual control of bodily passions for moral ends. Our modern pictures and fiction have dragged us back into the marshes of lust from which we were emerging. The law that an impulse must be gratified rather than controlled is purely naturalism. It is the blind law of the jungle and not the ideal of a mature, moral civilization.

What does religion have to do with all this? Has Jesus any word for our befuddled, lust-obsessed generation? He surely has. Your body is a temple of God, an instrument for spiritual mastery. If it is controlled by lust and bestiality, you commit high crime against the kingdom of your own spiritual domain and destroy the purity of another of God's children. The function of sex is not base and sinful. It is beautiful and divine. Its right use is the highest creative act of divine human fellowship.

Marriage is not a temporary arrangement, a contract between two bodies by which sexual license is legalized. Marriage is a divine ordinance by which two personalities become no longer two but one. Love like this has permanence as its first prerequisite. No true lovers ever felt the answer of soul to soul in deep affection without feeling that this was a deathless emotion. To degrade the idea of love and marriage by putting it upon an experimental and temporary basis, is to bring into the whole experience an element of insecurity and triviality that denies the very instinct of love itself. No new freedom can be purchased at the cost of moral self-respect, and the price we are paying to-day for our unstandardized sexual immorality is simply too heavy a price in human ideals and personal values. Every personality is sacred and we are the keepers of our brothers and sisters. This is the new chivalry that subjugates passion for spiritual ends and sublimates sex appeal into the warm comradeship of two hearts that love only as the pure can love.

To conclude, Jesus gave us no elaborate system of ethics. He laid down few if any rules. But he did have a unified and consistent thought on life, its aims, motives, and ends. We have not gone beyond him. He believed so thoroughly in the ultimate outcome of his ideal that he was perfectly willing to die for it. His ethical standard has never been popular. It never will be to the worldly mind and heart. We need not expect that Jesus's way of living can be accepted by men who do not accept him. He did not lead us to believe that his followers would soon be in the majority. In the world we have tribulation, a cross, a dreadful loneliness. But in him we may have peace, joy, and victory. For the time being we who are Christians have the ethics of the minority, but the time will come, it may be in the distant future, when the rule of Jesus will so possess the race that it will be obeyed naturally and unfailingly. The hope for this social miracle is in the religion of the spirit practiced day by day in the hearts of his followers.

CHAPTER VII

THE MIRACLE IN ETERNITY: THE POWER OF AN ENDLESS LIFE

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I

THE days of our years are threescore years and ten. For some of us the allotted time will be shortened and to only a few of us will come the experience of "living on borrowed time" beyond the average age, whether calculated by the ancient Biblical writer or the modern insurance actuary. Our days are "swifter than a weaver's shuttle." Of all the experiences of mortal beings death is the most certain. It may come soon or it may come late, it may come quickly or in lingering weakness—but come it will, and it knocks at the door of pauper and millionaire without discrimination or favoritism. As in all the elemental experiences of human existence we walk this somber path alone. We may be lost in the throng in life, but no multitude can overwhelm the majesty of our spirit's separateness when we come to pass within the veil. Here is one adventure that we are sure life holds for each of us.

Our thoughts and attitudes regarding death are still largely unchristian. Here and there we meet individuals who have triumphed over the paganism of current practices, but for the great majority death is looked upon as an unutterable woe and a baffling mystery. They are benumbed by its inevitableness and blinded by its desolation. And most of these of whom I am thinking are Christians, believing, theoretically at least, in the gospel and the power of him who is the resurrection and the life. They belong to the Church and have definitely accepted the Christian way of living—but not of dying. Here faith falters and loses itself in an attitude of pain and hesitancy. Death is thought of as a tragedy, and often viewed as an unrelieved misfortune that comes upon us because we live in a world ruled by sin and presided over by a helpless God. Indeed it is true of far too many of us that name his Name that "the last enemy to be destroyed is death."

This mystification regarding the Great Adventure carries over in the thought of many sincere believers when they contemplate the aftermath of death. Their hearts are troubled. They cry out for some satisfying certainty concerning their loved ones who have gone on before. Human nature almost breaks under the weight of sorrow's burden and love's tragedy. Take, for example, these letters that came recently to a minister's study from burdened spirits who could not see through their tears the answer that faith gives to the believing heart:

> "Four weeks ago I lost my only girl of three years, and my heart is torn as I think of her dear body wasting in her grave. It would be such a comfort if I could think of her as 'with the Good Shepherd.' It is all so complicated to me."

> "I have recently lost my only brother, called home suddenly in his prime a few months after the death of my father. I know they are in our Father's home, but everything else seems vague."
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> "Our dear one who was taken away from us a few months ago lived a most beautiful life for many years in spite of great suffering. She was anxious to go where there is no pain, being completely submissive to God's will. My mind is a perfect chaos of resentment, grief, worry, and, worst of all, uncertainty. I call myself a Christian, but wonder if I am what I should be. Why cannot I resign myself to conditions?"

I am within the bounds of accuracy when I say that the great majority of men and women in our world spend their lives under the shadow of this uncertainty concerning the experience of physical death and the life that follows. Nothing touches the heart of a modern minister more poignantly than the pathetic wistfulness of those who, without faith, must go through the valley and the shadow. Here is an experience that impinges on two worlds, and only he who knows the footpaths of both realms can walk with calmness and confidence along this border line.

Leaving aside for the moment the Christian answer, it may be well to ask the question: *Is* death an unrelieved tragedy in our world? If we were making a world with a moral purpose before us, would we have made a race of immortal Adams, unchanged and deathless? I cannot so think. Death lends grandeur and fruitfulness to life. Time takes on new values because it is transitory. Affection deepens because it lives in the shadow of an impending separation. Man is inspired to battle against his destiny, to project his thought out into eternity, to reach up through his finiteness to find the Infinite. Friends and families love with a deeper love because the sun shines on them but for a season; men and women work with higher intensity and grander seriousness because time marches on relentlessly toward the end of the earthly drama. The poetry and philosophy and mysticism of man have their roots in his thought of death and his refusal to regard it as the final answer to life. If man were undiscriminatingly immortal, he would be tempted to live in gladsome idleness, singing, playing, dancing, loving in a world that had neither gravity nor greatness. With the idea of death new meanings steal into life. How else can he be made to realize the immensity, the earnestness, the essential dignity of living, unless he can contemplate it in the light of a transitoriness that leads through the portal of death to eternal character and felicity?

II

Confronted by the enigmas of life and death, mankind has in all ages asked the question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" The satisfactory answer to the question has been sought in every field of human knowledge. No first-hand experience is available, as no one now on earth has experienced immortality.

Every human probability has been marshaled to convince the mind and heart that death does not end all. Science bids us believe on the basis of certain great cosmic facts from which the inference seems inevitable. Nothing in the universe is ever destroyed. Not only is matter indestructible, but energy as well. They may both change their forms, but they cannot be annihilated. This accepted theory of the conservation of energy leads by force of argument to the inference that personality, that highest form of human energy, also can never be destroyed. The modern doctrine of evolution, opening a long vista into the past and presupposing an endless development in the future, crowds upon us the question as to why all this evolving through pain and struggle if the end is not commensurate in significance and glory with the cost in suffering and loss. Surely, as Darwin expressed it, the doom to extinction of all sentient beings after such long-continued, slow progress "is an intolerable thought." Certain explorations are also going on in the fields of psychology and human consciousness that are leading us to believe that in this marginal shadowland of the subconscious and of the supersensuous there are powers of the soul not dependent upon the molecular action of the brain nor limited to this small earth-area for their spiritual play.

Philosophy confidently submits her testimony. Before her lies the whole realm of man's mind and thought about the world around us. She stands at the bier of a noble youth or maiden, cut down by disease or accident in early life, and protests that reason cannot consign such unfulfilled dreams to a dreamless grave. She lifts her voice by the grave of a noble and gracious personality to insist that, in a rational universe, such personal glory of mind and spirit belongs to the immortal destinies of the world. Philosophy is convinced that man's reach is greater than his grasp and that before him stretches a world of unfolding progress whose ending is in light and not darkness, in victory and not defeat.

And yet these conclusions of science and philosophy do not satisfy us. They are at best but grand hypotheses, brave probabilities, noble perhapses. We cannot rest our yearning spirit in their noble optimism. I personally question whether we have any right to expect science and philosophy to give us a certified answer. They cannot disprove immortality, neither can they prove it. They help us by the attested methods and forms of thought in which they move, but the assurance of immortality abides in a realm where neither science nor philosophy has the last word. That last word it to be found, if it is ever to be found in this life, in the teaching and experience of religion. And in religion the last word is with Jesus of Nazareth. He is eternity's Word in time.

The eschatology of the New Testament is a subject of large difficulty and not a little difference of individual interpretation is to be encountered when one seeks to understand the subject. Here, as elsewhere, the roots are found in the Old Testament. Jesus offers no formal proof of a future existence, but presupposes it and speaks of it as man's destiny. He centers upon his idea of the kingdom of God, carrying over the Old Testament concept, but deepening and enlarging its significance. Undoubtedly the words of Jesus concerning the future are affected by the current Messianism of his day. In brief, Jesus avoids all speculative and theoretic questions and deals with practical relations and broad moral issues. The kingdom is a thing of the actual present, it is "at hand," available now as a fellowship of believing hearts. But it is also a fact of the future. Its complete realization, coming as a result of a gradual, unobtrusive growth, will be established finally by a great conclusive event. Such seems to be the teaching of the Synoptic Gospels. In the fourth Gospel the emphasis is laid upon the spiritual aspects of the kingdom as a present and immediate possession of the believer. The apostolic testimony is varied and not free from critical problems. It is based, in the main, upon the implied teachings of Jesus and is colored everywhere by the belief that he had risen from the dead and "become the first fruits of them that slept." The brief compass of this chapter does not permit, even if its author were capable of presenting, a critical study of the eschatology of Jesus and the apostles. There is, however, a main body of truth, made clear by specific statement and by reasonable implication in the New Testament, that furnishes a sure and sufficient basis for a doctrine of eternal life which is both sound and satisfying. If some one shall contend, with disappointment, that we yet leave many questions unanswered, our reply shall be that speculation must wait on the progress of practical application. There is more truth, undisputed and indisputable, than most of us have ever dared to put into practice as we face the personal issues of death and the future life. With such considerations we are now mainly concerned.

We must first of all free ourselves from certain misconceptions that have crept into our thinking as the result of uncritical scholarship, faulty theology, and unspiritual imagination. Far be it from our purpose to disturb the saints who rest in comfortable half-truths, but there is a vast body of Christians who demand that we shall press reverently but fearlessly nearer to the border line where reality dwells. Our interpretations here must be in the spirit and not in the letter of the New Testament.

A common idea has persisted in the thinking of many people that physical death is a penalty imposed upon humanity because of the sin of the federal head of the race, Adam. They contend that if Adam had not sinned man would have been immortal, and that death would never have been the lot of mankind. The whole question, therefore, of the indiscriminate mortality of the hunman race would be made to depend upon the faultlessness of our original ancestor. Death, with all its consequences in the further life of the universe, becomes an uncontemplated accident, the result of an unfortunate, fortuitous moral choice of one man in a distant and morally dim past. The consequences of this are too far-reaching to appeal to reason. A restudy of Malthus's "Essay on Population" would convince the most skeptical that, unless death had graciously intervened, by this time standing room would be at a premium upon the face of the earth, and neither physical nor moral life of a high order any longer possible. Such a theory proceeds upon the assumption that physical death is a disaster and has been imposed as a penalty upon what would otherwise be a physically immortal race. I find no adequate ground for this assumption in the New Testament. St. Paul approaches it most nearly, but even here the spirit of his words must lead us to conclude that when he tells us that "through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin," he has in the back of his mind all the time the death of the higher self that comes as a result of sin. We are nearer the central thought of this fifth chapter of Romans when we read in the nineteenth verse, "For as through one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of one shall the many be made righteous." The apostle is constantly using this term "death" to express the destructive power of sin. "When the commandment came, sin revived, *and I died;* . . . for sin . . . through the commandment beguiled me, and through it slew me." He is certainly here speaking not of physical death, but of the passing of an old self to be resurrected from the death of sin by the abundant grace of God which "did abound more exceedingly."

Mortality is a constituent part of human nature. Our bodies have time limits set in them by the gracious and wise hand of the Creator, and death is no more unnatural than birth. If we could see it as our Father sees it, in all the bright glory of what Elizabeth Barrett Browning calls the "luminous side of death," we should not count it a human penalty but a divine release.

"Who will venture to say that the dream of an innocent Eden, a single paradise of immortals, is comparable to this majestic procession of mortals moving as to the music of a celestial dead march through time toward immortality?"[1]

There is another obscurity in our thinking that we need to face. What do we mean when we declare, "I believe in the resurrection of the body"? Certainly we do not mean that the atoms and molecules of this physical body shall be reassembled and resurrected. From what passage of the Scriptures do we infer this? The idea is not only unscriptural, but actually repulsive in most of its implications. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." There are different kinds of bodies, each divinely adapted to its environment and function. "There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." That which we sow at death is a natural body, that which is resurrected is a spiritual body. "As we have borne the image of

[1] Fairbairn, "The Philosophy of the Christian Religion," p. 144. The Macmillan Company.

the earthy, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly." In our narrow, human experience we cannot think of our spirits except as they house themselves in the tabernacles of the flesh. But these bodies are not our real selves. They are the vehicles of our spirits in a physical universe. They are perfectly adapted for the purpose for which they were created, but we must not expect them in their literal fleshliness to be adapted to a purely spiritual level of life. God has not exhausted himself in creating these bodies. He has yet more marvelous creations of glory awaiting us. We shall be changed "from glory to glory." We believe that we shall "see him as he is," but the eye of flesh cannot behold spirit, and "God is a Spirit." So if we are to enjoy the felicity of a spiritual existence, we shall need bodies not of flesh and blood but of spirit. We need not fear the loss of these frail habiliments of flesh, for God has promised to give us a body "even as it pleased him." I do not despise these beautiful bodies of ours, but I do believe that God will give us a spiritual body as well adapted for that world as the physical organism of our present body is for this world.

The butterfly released by a process of nature from its binding, blinding prison house, flies in the vastness of a new world of freedom and light, reflecting on iridescent wings the golden sunlight of a new universe of unimagined beauty, nor does it sigh again for the old outworn cocoon which it leaves on the threshold of its new adventure. So shall it be with the soul when God shall open the door and set us free, and we shall come into the full glory of the resurrection body. Nor shall we pine for the old home of the flesh, but we shall rejoice to be at home in the Spirit, in the vastness of God's spiritual realm, where pain never comes and sorrows die before they are born. "For this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." "Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

What we really yearn for is the assurance of the preservation of personal identity. And this is beyond dispute. This body is the seed of the heavenly body. As the grain of wheat dies in the warm earth, there springs from its dying sacrifice a stalk of wheat, infinitely more beautiful and fruitful than the bare grain from which it sprang. But there is a continuity here. The particular stalk is implicit in the particular grain from which it sprang. So God gives "to each seed a body of its own." Therefore, when I stand to repeat the creed, I mean that I believe in the resurrection of the spiritual body, kin to, but infinitely more glorious than, this natural body. I believe in the preservation of personal, bodily identity, the conservation of individual personality in those forms of spiritual organism which shall best preserve the loved treasures of earth and enjoy the higher blessedness of heaven.

"Eternal form shall still divide
The eternal soul from all beside,
And I shall know him when we meet."

We also need deliverance from another misconception which clouds our worthy thought of the future. Our imaginative pictures of heaven and the future life have been characterized oftentimes by a childishness and a selfishness that are unworthy of our best selves. We picture it as a place of perfect rest, yea, even of noble idleness. Our imagery revels in Oriental splendors that charm the imagination, even if they do not provide a worthy theater for immortal souls engaged in spiritual enterprises. You recall the dear old woman, harassed in life by burdensome toil, who declared that she knew exactly what she was going to do when she got to heaven. She was "going to put on a white apron and sit down in a rocking-chair *and stay sot.*" We must beware that we do not take a view of the future that makes it a kind of gratuitous blessing which we selfishly enjoy because we have lived decently enough to escape from the penalty of hell. Heaven may become a purely selfish concept.

I would not be understood as meaning to repress the tendency to visualize the bliss of the future in terms which have meaning and significance to us now. Blessed be our hallowed, Christian imaginations! But even here let us be careful to keep the fact and not the figure of speech before us. We do not mean by imagination, to use a phrase of Tyndall's "a riotous power which deals capriciously with facts, but a well-disciplined power whose sole function it is to form conceptions which the intellect imperatively demands." It is perfectly right and proper that we should sing,

"There is a land of pure delight,
Where saints immortal dwell,"

because no human mind can go beyond the glories "which the Lord promised to them that love him." Poetic imagery may be nearer the truth at last than prosaic realism.

III

How does Jesus meet this insistent demand of the human heart for knowledge of the future? Has he any sure word for those who sit in the shadow of darkness and wait with tear-dimmed eyes for the breaking of the morning? Is there a balm in Gilead for our breaking hearts, and is the Galilean lord of death as of life?

There must be some significance in the word Jesus used in connection with the experience that we call death. All three of the Synoptic Gospels record the raising of the daughter of Jairus. They come to him from the house of the ruler of the synagogue to tell him that the maiden is dead. To the sorrowing relatives and friends Jesus says: "Weep not; for she is not dead, *but sleepeth.*" The account in each instance goes on to say that they laughed him to scorn, "knowing that she was dead." He uses the same word regarding Lazarus: "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." Unquestionably Jesus must have known in each of these instances that the physical experience which man calls death had taken place, but when he refers to it he uses the beautiful and significant word "sleep." Sleep always has implicit in it an awakening. And so the sleep of death has implicit in it a resurrection, when the shadows flee and the morning breaks. Hence the early Christians spoke of their dead as those who had "fallen asleep." The idea is carried over into our places of burial when we call them cemeteries, that is, "sleeping places." Quite clearly in the mind of the early church, inspired by the thought of Jesus, death was not regarded as a permanent dissolution of selfhood, but merely a surcease of restless activity followed by a sure and certain awakening for those who "fall asleep in him."

"So shall it be at last in that bright morning,
When the soul waketh, and life's shadows flee,
O, in that hour, fairer than daylight dawning,
Shall rise the glorious thought—I am with thee."

The attitude of Jesus to his own death is one of the most reassuring facts of the New Testament. Cut down in the midst of his years, he did not flee from death as something to be escaped from at all hazards. He walked deliberately into it, and freely laid down his life for the sin of the world. His joy triumphs over the tragic elements that sin casts into the whole experience. His soul was exceeding sorrowful, but it was not for himself or his disciples. It was for his nation, his own loved Israel, that knew not the time of her visitation. This was the supreme bitterness in the cup that he drank. Tragic as it might be for his enemies, death was only an incident in the changeless purpose of his life. He does not think of it as a calamitous defeat, but rather as a gateway into even larger potentialities of service. "It is expedient for you that I go away." "I will not leave you desolate."

The apostolic group had the same triumphant attitude toward physical death. Paul would willingly depart and be with the Lord. The disciples were utterly indifferent to the physical consequences of their Christian testimony. They might die, but death could not rob them of their most precious possessions. Stephen, dying, beholds Jesus even before consciousness fades away. The martyrs in the arenas of the Roman Empire died with a holy enthusiasm that can be explained only by the glorious certainty that "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

There is another ground for the integrity of the Christian hope of the future. Jesus certifies it with his own promise. In that beautiful and comforting chapter of the fourth Gospel, where Jesus tells his disciples not to let their hearts be troubled, but to believe in him even as they believed in God, he goes on to add, "In my Father's house are many mansions; *if it were not so, I would have told you."* This clause opens like a flash a whole vista of light to our yearning gaze. "If it were not so"—then we could depend on him to protect us from the dread disappointment of hopes that had no foundation in fact. Jesus recognizes the moral responsibility that rests upon him to deal fairly with human spirits. He cannot be a party to foisting upon mankind a grand delusion. "If it were not so"—then the whole integrity of his moral character is pledged to tell us that it is not true. But it is true. The universe is honest. God plays fair with his children. We are not the playthings of divine caprice. Eternity is hidden in our hearts, and the dreaming urge of countless multitudes will be satisfied, because he who said, "I will receive you unto myself; that where I am ye may be also," can absolutely be depended upon to keep his sacred word.

IV

The query now arises from every heart, what are the conditions upon which the personal immortality which Jesus promises may become the possession of the Christian believer? There is no reason to suppose that personal immortality of this glorious kind is the indiscriminate or talismanic gift to every human being by virtue of having been born in a human shape. There are some gifts that God himself cannot give and still retain his ethical character. They must be earned by the recipient on the basis of spiritual yearning or moral victory. There are souls that are earth-bound, that have no passion for purity or longing for holiness. If there are men and women who now care neither to pray, nor worship, nor serve God and their fellow man, what will they do with an eternity on their hands in which these are the normal exercises of ransomed souls? Was it not Emerson who asked, Of what use is eternity to a man who does not know how to use a half hour? There must be a soul worthy of conservation before God can conserve it. He will be merciful, he will not quench the smoking flax nor break the bruised reed; but even God in all his tenderness cannot confer heaven as a dowry upon a soul that has deliberately chosen to live in hell. Here we must speak with caution, "for the love of God is broader than the measure of man's mind," and it is not for us to set arbitrary limits to either the power or love of the Creator in dealing with degraded souls who have missed their way in this brief life span. His lovingkindness is from everlasting to everlasting, but it is always exercised in conformity to his righteousness and holy will.

Personal immortality, conceived of as simply continuous existence, is not a treasure to be desired. Merely to live on for the sole reason of living in perpetual escape from death and punishment is an experience we might contemplate with dread rather than with joyous expectation. Nothing could be more stale than mere endless existence. An everlasting *ennui* would drive us to despair. What the New Testament promises believers is eternal life. Eternal life is entering here and now into a kind of life-experience so full of richness and meaning that it is worth going on with. There is only one condition under which immortality is desirable, and that is that we shall possess eternal life. It is a kind of life, a qualitative appreciation of supreme values, that makes eternity worth while and desirable. As Stevens says in his "Theology of the New Testament": "Eternal life represents an ethical or qualitative conception. This blessed life which is realized in fellowship with God is eternal, not merely in the sense of imperishable or endless, but in the higher sense of the true Godlike life which, by reason of its kinship to God, is raised above all limits of time and space. It is life as opposed to the moral death of sin."[2] Jesus said: "He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, *hath eternal life,* and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life."

This glorious experience of eternity in the midst of time comes to those who know the present life of God in their souls. It is the possession of believers who are united with Christ by faith. "If a man keep my word, he shall never taste death." The argument of Paul in the fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians is addressed to believers. The whole passage deals solely with Christians, "they that are Christ's" and know the bliss of living "in him." To those, therefore, whose lives are hid with Christ in God there can come no death, they "have passed from death unto life," and no longer can sin hold dominion over their mortal bodies. Physical death cannot touch the life of the spirit. We die to self to live forever to God.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead was the absolute historical proof to the early Church that he had triumphed over death and the grave. They had seen him descend into the earth, a victim of death, only to witness on the third day his resurrection and reappearance among them. Death could not hold captive the Lord of life. There was something in that breaking heart of love that could not be reached with the cruel agonies of the cross. He might yield his fair body to the destructiveness of the sons of darkness, but his heart, his life, his spirit he would yield only to the Father. "Into thy hand I commend my spirit!" He had once for all demonstrated the impotence of death. It might destroy the house in which he lived, but it could not destroy him. He was alive forevermore.

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[2] *Op. cit.,* p. 221. Charles Scribner's Sons.

> "Surely the Lord of Life, whose name is Love,
> Is Lord of Death as well."

Both Jesus and the apostles would have us understand that Jesus's experience may, through faith in him, become our experience. He is the first fruits of them that slept, and because he lives we shall live also. This is true because we have become united with him. He lives in us and we live in him. As the vine and the branch are one, so Jesus and the believer are one. His glory is our glory and our shame is his shame. We have eaten his flesh and drunk his blood in spiritual assimilation. Like the French soldier, whose heart, pierced, would reveal the Emperor, so Jesus has become so spiritually enmeshed within the tendrons of our heart and will that for us to live is Christ and to die is gain. Thus Jesus came into the transitoriness of our mortal life and placed upon it the imprint of eternity. He translated the passion for immortality from the realm of wistful speculation into the simple lines of a fellowship with God open to all who would believe and love. He brought life and immortality to light. He found men and women crowding the gates of life and he lifted those gates from their hinges and bade the Christian believer enter upon an endless adventure. He opened the casements of heaven and let the winds of God blow upon the winter-bound hearts of mankind until an eternal springtime of hope burst anew in the souls of men. Because he lives we shall live also, for the simple yet profound reason that we live in him and he can know no death.

V

If these facts are true, they ought to be the most glorious and wonderful facts of life, shedding a radiance and beauty like unto the glory of heaven over the light of our common day. Let us look for a few moments at this miracle which Jesus works amid the austere and stern realities of this life.

Immortality, in its true meaning, is not something that awaits us after death, but something which begins here within the soul dwelling in the midst of time. The victory of life over death begins in the victory of righteousness over sin. Our thoughts should be centered upon making this present hour an immortal hour, because in it dwells love that is eternal. Salvation is not a matter of time and place, but of spiritual attitude and relation to God. Eternal life is the life whose essence is love. Love is of God and the spiritual life that is based on love is grounded in God. Hence when once our lives are linked with him, in unity of purpose and oneness of inner life, we share the glorious certainty of an eternity which shall know no end in time or space, but shall belong to the infinity of God. Our major task is not to sit idly by and wait for an immortality that shall be arbitrarily conferred upon us, but so to live that we may achieve a life that shall be worthy to endure forever with the Lord.

There is another victory that awaits us. Death has lost its terror to the Christian. Jesus by giving us the secret of victory over sin has taken the sting out of the grave. When our minds are occupied with "thoughts immortal and divine," or with some great spiritual enterprise, we have neither time nor disposition to brood over our personal future. So death should find us busy with great and eternal imperatives. To a mind so attuned "physical death ought to appear no more than an incident in life, an event to be accepted as naturally as sleep." And so it has been regarded by multitudes of victorious believers. There is a touching incident which Ramsay MacDonald tells in his exquisite memoir of his wife, whose spirit seems ever to hover over the great English Prime Minister. It is the account of her passing into the spirit world. "Her faith stood the test to the end. When she knew that she was close by the opening gateway of death, I asked her if she desired to see any one who would speak to her of what was to come. 'That would be a waste of time,' she replied. 'I have always been ready. Let us praise God together for what has been. He has been very good to me in giving me my work, my friends, and my faith. At the end of the day I go gladly to him for rest and shelter.' She was convinced that life and time were not the sum and substance of experience, and went away as though but starting on a journey which, beginning in darkness, would proceed through light. She would hold my hand, she said, till those who had gone before gave her greetings."

One is reminded of Studdert Kennedy's lines, written shortly before his death:

> "So I looked up to God,
> And while I held my breath
> I saw Him slowly nod,
> And knew—as I had never known aught else,
> With certainty sublime and passionate,
> Shot through and through
> With sheer unutterable bliss,
> I knew
> There was no death but this,
> God's kiss.
> And then the waking to an Everlasting Love."

Or take the message of one still living in the body, but waiting in quietness for the final summons. Dr. Ozora S. Davis, of the Chicago Theological Seminary, in an interview incident to retiring from active duties, said: "Of course, I don't want to go—this is a mighty interesting world and I'm having a mighty good time in it. But I am no more afraid of going than of going through the door of this study. For I know that I shall have a spiritual body to do with as I please and I won't have to worry about the aches and pains of the poor physical body." The last miracle has been wrought, the miracle that conquers death.

"Death may be nothing more
Than opening of a door,
Through which men pass away,
As stars into the day." [3]

There is often an even more positive note of triumph that sometimes occurs, showing how complete is the victory of immortality over mortality, of life over death. You will recall John Wesley's story of the death of Susannah Wesley, the sainted Mother of Methodism. "Her look was calm and serene, and her eyes were fixed upward, as the requiem to her departing soul was sung by her children. It was just four o'clock. She opened her eyes wide, and fixed them upwards for a moment. Then the lids dropped, and the soul was set at liberty, without one struggle or groan or sigh. We stood round the bed, and fulfilled her last request, uttered a little while before she lost her speech, 'Children, as soon as I am released, sing a psalm of praise to God.'" With a memory like this fresh in his mind, it is not strange that, when her most illustrious son came down to the crossing of the river, he shouted, like a soldier exulting in the moment of victory, "The best of all is, God is with us."

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[3] St. John Adcock.

When Savonarola, dressed in penitential haircloth, mounted the platform on which his martyrdom was to take place, he took his position by a huge cross with fagots heaped at its base. The Dominican bishop enacted the ceremonial of degradation. Sacerdotal robes were thrown over his shoulders and then roughly stripped off by the representative of the Church. The bishop of Vasona then declared: "I separate thee from the Church militant and the Church triumphant." Savonarola replied in firm tones: "Not from the Church triumphant; that is beyond thy power."

This is not a departed glory that belonged only to our fathers. It is the sustaining strength of the children of this generation who dare to believe that in Jesus we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. On the twenty-ninth of last June Bramwell Booth was laid to rest in Abney Park Cemetery, London, by the side of his illustrious father, William Booth. Note the points in that impressive funeral scene as reported by the Associated Press. The last journey of the man of peace was participated in by more people than followed the body of the Duke of Wellington. There was no evidence of sadness. There was regret, but no sorrow, for, as the Army phrased it, their general had been promoted to glory. The funeral cortege was simplicity itself, except for the bright colors of flags of many nations under which the Army had worked. The standard bearers of the procession made a circle around the grave, raising their banners high. Ten thousand voices answered the request of Commissioner Catherine Booth, daughter of the general, to sing the stirring music of the Army. Then followed a moment of silence and prayer. There rested on the coffin the peaked Army cap and spectacles of the general and a Bible open at the place where he had last read. During the ceremony Mrs. Booth sat motionless, her eyes fixed on the casket. Not until it was being lowered did her courage desert her for a moment. Then a tear trickled down her face, but she brushed it resolutely away and walked with quick, firm steps to the platform. "Our general," she said, "has entered into the joy of his Lord." She exhorted her hearers to follow the example of her husband and then led them in saying the Lord's Prayer.

I ask in all seriousness, why should not this be the normal, rather than the occasional, mood and temper of our passing? If we could only see the luminous side of death, if we could only rest happy and contented in His will, if we could only shake ourselves free from the traditional attitude to death, then we might rise triumphant over the grave and the last enemy would be abolished. It is all implicit in the Christian gospel if we dared to believe it.

Where are our loved ones who have fallen asleep in Christ? Many an anxious heart cries out for an answer. They have simply gone out of the body into spirit. They have dropped the impediment of the flesh to dwell in the freedom of a spiritual existence. They are not wandering aimlessly upon some distant celestial shore. They are in God, they behold the Father's face, they are in the fellowship of Christ, they are living in a spiritual body perfectly adapted for their glorified and redeemed life. If they are with God, they are with us, for God is not far off but closer than breathing and nearer than our very hands and feet. They surround us as a great cloud of witnesses, beholding us from within the veil, moving upon us in spiritual compulsions, ministering to our innermost hearts, a part of the great spiritual universe which presses upon us and beckons us ever onward and upward. They are the guests of God and await our home-coming when we shall enter into the gates of Life.

"I cannot think of them as dead
  Who walk with me no more;
Along the path of life I tread
  They have but gone before.

Mine are they by an ownership
  Nor time nor death can free;
For God hath given to Love to keep
  Its own eternally."[4]

Let us revert for a moment to those pathetic, plaintive words with which our friends clothed their doubt and dismay regarding the future: "So complicated to me"; "Everything seems vague"; "Perfect chaos of uncertainty." Is this as far as we can go on the road to certainty? Not if we believe our gospel. There is much that is left yet to be discovered, but there are certain great and glorious facts that lift themselves like mountain peaks above the mists. The way to solve the mysteries of the future is to meet the moral demands of the present. These facts remain true by the testimony of the Scriptures and the authority of the inward witness. The Christian passes from death unto life when he is united in faith with Jesus Christ. From that time on he is in God and God is in him. They are one and inseparable. As the branch and the vine share a common plant life, so God and the Christian share a common spiritual life. God is eternal by his very nature and whoever lives in him lives eternally. Immortality therefore becomes not a quantitative duration of time stretching from this time drama into endless eternity. Immortality, in the sense in which we think of it, has now become eternal life, God's gift to those who believe in his name and share his nature.

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[4] Frederick Lucian Hosmer.

True it is that we cannot understand death. Neither can we understand birth. In mystery we begin and in mystery we end our earthly lives. We see through a glass darkly. But out beyond us is the light and the light is with God, and the light is God, and our dear ones are in his care, safe in the mansions of his love. If this be not true, then is our faith vain and we have missed the meaning of his word, and of his Person in Christ.

When the shadows fall over an earthly day and our task is done, we lay us down in slumber confident that round about us are angel faces keeping watch above his own. We sleep in peace because we look for the morning. So when earth's last long shadows fall and our task in time is done, we shall hear the whirr of seraph wings and fall asleep to awaken in his presence in cloudless and eternal morning.

> "Why be afraid of Death as though your life were breath?
> Death but anoints your eyes with clay. O glad surprise!
> Why should you be forlorn? Death only husks the corn.
> Why should you fear to meet the thresher of the wheat?
> Is sleep a thing to dread? Yet sleeping, you are dead
> Till you awake and rise, here, or beyond the skies.
> Why should it be a wrench to leave your wooden bench,
> Why not with happy shout run home when school is out?
> The dear ones left behind? O foolish one and blind.
> A day, and you will meet; a night, and you will greet!
> This is the death of Death, to breathe away a breath,
> And know the end of strife, and taste the deathless life,
> And joy without fear, and smile without a tear,
> And work nor care to rest, and find the last the best."[5]

[5] Maltbie D. Babcock.

CHAPTER VIII

THE UNFINISHED MIRACLE: TAKING JESUS SERIOUSLY

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THE UNFINISHED MIRACLE: TAKING JESUS SERIOUSLY

I

NINETEEN hundred years and more have passed since that vivid day when John the Baptist cried as he saw Jesus approaching, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!" The Christian movement had its origin in a Person who lived many years ago on this earth. In the light of the radiant personality of Jesus Christ his pretentious claims to world authority and divine mastery over the spirits of men seemed plausible and challengingly possible. But the distinctness of his person was soon lost to faith. In insistence upon superstitious adoration or ecclesiastical orthodoxy the Church forgot the historical Jesus. They transformed him into the figure of a celestial Christ who was little more than a functionary in the divine scheme of salvation. There grew up a mythical devotion to a Christ who belonged more naturally in an art glass window in a cathedral, or in the lines of an imaginative poem, than in the rigid fixedness of a definite period of human history. And yet the Christian mind has never been able to remain permanently very far away from the historic Jesus. Whenever it tries to, it loses the security of its foothold. Over and over again we have heard ourselves say: "This thing actually happened; this is true; Jesus *did* live and die; Jesus *did* rise; Jesus *did* teach this message of salvation." No intelligent man to-day denies the historicity of Jesus and his ministry.

The battle, however, is being waged on another front. We do not deny that he lived, they say, but what of it if he did live? What relationship has that fact to our life of to-day? Why drag us back into the primitive first century for an ideal with which to shape our life in the twentieth century? What significance for us can there be in a Galilean peasant who never knew the complexities of our modern world and was innocent of the forces that dominate and control our Western civilization? Not long ago an English traveler overheard one Russian peasant say to another, "Jesus Christ lived a very long time ago, and was not so well educated as Lenin and Trotsky." It was simply his crude way of expressing his impatience with our devotion to the historical Jesus. And many another modern sophist, scornful of his debt to the past, declaims loudly the freedom of our present egoistic civilization from all the crude primitiveness which belongs to a bygone age. Can Jesus thus be relegated disdainfully to the first century?

Wait a moment. The very impulse which leads us to disregard him reveals our pathetic need of him. It is the wide disparity between the ideals that control us and that motivated him that makes us willing to leave him aside as unimportant. What we value most highly he esteemed most lightly. The major trends of our civilization cut directly across the lines of his emphasis. We struggle for wealth; he regards it as a moral peril. We seek authority over other men; he urges humble service to men. We live in a society that is dominated by a caste system that honors those who have possessions and social standing; he believes in only the aristocracy of heart and will. We place great store by self-assertion; his secret is humility. We accept a competitive world as final; he visions a coöperative world as possible. We take counsel of our fears and build battleships; he takes counsel of his faith and builds good will. We exalt nationalism; he pleads for brotherhood. There is but little compatibility between the moral idealism of Jesus and the working hypotheses of our present-day American life. The sooner the minority Christian mind of the nation recognizes this fact the more quickly shall we understand the difficulty and challenge of this hour.

It is the many-sided appeal of outward things that wears down our sensitiveness to inward values. We have achieved a material civilization of richness, splendor, and marvelous utility. But we have neglected our inner life and failed to construct adequate defenses against the surging tides of externalism that threaten to engulf us in a sea of materialism. "We have all gone astray and lost our way in things material—the scholar in his investigations, the politician in his campaigns, the merchant in his business." Moral idealism, prophetic insight, spiritual vision, Christian self-renunciation—these are values that are rated very low on the market of American public opinion. A nation that will buy every week over 2,250,000 copies of a periodical that carries on its editorial flag mast the pagan slogan of Stephen Decatur, "Our Country! In her intercourse with foreign nations may she always be in the right; but our country *right or wrong,*" certainly cannot claim to be very much in sympathy with the mind of Jesus. It ought not to be difficult therefore to understand that Jesus Christ is an offense to many of our current ideas of life. How comfortable a doctrine it is to believe that he is only a wistful memory, a voice of the long ago, no longer to be heeded or obeyed! It is a broad path that leadeth to destruction. A recent biographer almost startles us when he begins a volume with this statement: "When one looks upon the ease and richness and abundance of modern American life, its kaleidoscopic color and variety, its mad bustle and profusion of motion and locomotion, one feels more inclined to descant upon its possessions than upon its needs. Yet if one stops in all the hurry to reflect, the needs become apparent and crying, and in all the loud hurly-burly not one need stands out more potent than the need of God. The world has always needed him no doubt. But it seems as if the America of to-day needs him most because it is so complacently satisfied to get along without him. . . . God seems to have drifted far away from most of us, or we from him, so far that neither airplane nor wireless will suffice to call him back."[1]

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[1] Gamaliel Bradford, "D. L. Moody: A Worker in Souls."

Do we dare to take Jesus seriously? Do we dare to believe that he meant what he said? Have we whittled down the offer of Jesus Christ to the point where it is easy of attainment and carries no reorganizing commands into our daily life? Can we be his disciples and still play the game with the crowd? Do we interpret Jesus traditionally or vitally? Is "the Galilean too great for our small hearts"? Is the Sermon on the Mount to be taken with seriousness? Do we believe that Jesus meant what he said when he said:

> Love your enemies.
> Blessed are the meek.
> Resist not him that is evil.
> Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.
> It is more blessed to give than to receive.
> Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth.
> If ye ask anything in my name, that will I do.
> He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also.
> Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat and what ye shall drink.
> All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them.

How literally are these words to be taken? Or a more important question: How literally are the principles so evident behind these words to be taken? Is a man a crank or a religious fanatic if he deliberately sets out to put these principles into personal and social action? Must he expect the scorn and contumely of the world when he is willing to become a "fool for Christ's sake"? I say deliberately that no man dare claim the authority of the Spirit of God to preach the full gospel of Jesus Christ who has not faced fearlessly the high challenge of these cutting two-edged imperatives. And woe unto him if he hides out from the sunlight in the shadows of cant and traditionalism! "Dick" Shepherd is right when he says in his stirring book, "The Impatience of a Parson," "I am convinced that the world is looking for a fresher, truer, and larger version of the religion of Jesus Christ and that it is justified in requiring it." Are we ready to give it, or shall we simply sound our shibboleths, tinker with our machinery, and follow our Lord afar off?

II

I am raising here for our serious contemplation the question as to how far we have been willing to follow "Jesus's way all the way." I realize that such an examination may bring deep dismay. I am not taking gleeful delight in dragging forth our shortcomings and washing our ecclesiastical linen in the public gaze of the passer-by. But when large and significant groups of people are telling us, often with red-hot passion, that *"we Christians do not believe what we say we believe,"* perhaps it is time for us to sound the depths and test the seaworthiness of our faith. Was Robertson of Brighton right when he said, "The sacrifice of Jesus must be completed and repeated in the light of each true follower"? If this had been done, even in measurable degree, would multitudes to-day be passing the church by as impotent and negligible? The common people of Jesus's day heard him eagerly and gladly, but in our day "ordinary working people," says George Lansbury of England, "think very little about churches or religion. Not that they can be said to be hostile to either, but simply because *for huge masses of our people the churches do not exist.*" Such indictments are sufficiently common, general, and intelligent to lead us into a court of self-examination which may both startle and at the same time help to deliver us. At least let us face with candor and conscience certain questions.

Have we taken him seriously in the Church itself? Do his followers follow him? Is the full gospel of Jesus the Church's sole charter of life? Surely this is the place where we should begin, within the circle of his acknowledged discipleship.

Have we taken him seriously in following the simplicity of his way of salvation? Bundy, in his significant book, "The Discovery of Jesus," tells us that Jesus really gave only one commandment and that was, "Follow me." That would answer all questions. Give him your personal loyalty, believe in his way of living, walk in it by the help of God, and thus grow day by day in the knowledge and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is an utter absence of any formality or involved technique. When a man became a Christian in those days he simply said to himself and to God as he looked into the face of Jesus: "What he is I want to be; what he thinks I want to think; what he says I want to say; what he loves I want to love; what he does I want to do." And saying this, he stepped out into a radiant fellowship that instantly gave him a sense of sonship with God and gradually transformed the raw material of his human nature into the spiritual will that loves God and him only.

Jesus set a child in the midst of his generation as a symbol of the secret of entering into his kingdom. He never meant it to be intellectually difficult to begin the Christian life. All that one need bring was a good heart and a willing will and knowledge would come on apace with spiritual growth. We have not always dealt so frankly and simply with seeking hearts. Barriers of form and creed have made it hard to find the open door. We have too often insisted upon a certain type of experience, usually highly emotional, as the hallmark of a genuine work of the Spirit. We have standardized the way of salvation until it has become for many no longer a path of reality. We have forgotten that in the Temple in the midst of the Holy City, the new Jerusalem that comes down out of heaven from God, "on the east were three gates; and on the north three gates; and on the south three gates; and on the west three gates"—and the gates were never shut. Any pilgrim soul seeking the Father's face could, no matter from what angle he might approach the Temple, find an open door awaiting him. There is many a man waiting on the outside of our churches to-day who would come in if he only knew how, but he is ill at ease in the presence of many strange doctrines and binding forms upon which we have laid loud and long emphasis. We have too often made the way more involved than Jesus made it.

In the year 1921 Dr. Lyman Abbott was seated in a pastor's study. He had just written his wonderful book, "What Christianity Means to Me." He was waiting to review it before an audience that loved and respected him genuinely. He had come early and had over half an hour to wait. On the desk lay a fresh copy of his book.

"Doctor," the pastor said, "will you autograph this copy, and write in it the ripest thought that has come into your mind during your sixty-odd years of Christian growth?"

Dr. Abbott took his great fountain pen from his pocket and, resting his elbow on the arm of the chair, held the pen poised. The pastor left him thus. Returning half an hour later he found him as he had left him and again withdrew. When he finally came to call him to the meeting the ink was scarcely dry; but he read, never to forget, these words:

"The Christianity of Jesus was not a philosophy which he taught; it is a life which he imparts."

The religion of Jesus Christ is best understood in terms of friendship. That was where he rested it and demonstrated it. He loved God; he loved men; he wanted men to love him and so come to love God and their fellow men. The question he asked of men was the same question the universe asks of us: not "What do you believe?" but "What do you love?" Christianity is simply the practice day by day of the friendship of God as he is revealed in Jesus Christ.

> "If our love were but more simple,
> We should take him at his word;
> And our lives would be all sunshine
> In the sweetness of our Lord."

Are we willing to take him seriously in the matter of our attitude to material possessions?

Of course we know what Jesus's attitude was to outward possessions. They occupied a secondary place in his thinking. We were to take no anxious thought regarding personal property because a man's true life did not consist in his material holdings, but in his spiritual attitude. He was no iconoclast, neither was he a mendicant embracing poverty as a grand gesture. He simply solved the problem by spiritualizing his whole attitude to possessions, and clearly establishing the priority of spiritual claims over material desires. "Seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." What proportion of his followers to-day takes, with even moderate seriousness, this attitude of Jesus?

We are the victims of high-powered salesmanship propaganda the sole intent of which is to create material desires and stimulate an itch to possess more than our neighbor. It has been calculated that a hundred years ago the average person had 72 wants, of which 16 were necessities. The average person to-day has 484 wants of which 94 are rated as necessities. A century ago in the United States there were about 200 different items urged upon men for their purchase. To-day there are 32,000. Jesus tells us that life is never to be measured by the abundance of things. Modern advertising keeps bombarding us with the insistence that life does consist in the abundance of things possessed. The modern salesman has two ideas in his mind when he approaches you. He wishes first to sell you an article and then, in an unbelievably short time, he will try to make you believe that what you bought is out-of-date and you should purchase a new model. We are constantly subjected to the most unchristian appeals to buy certain articles because in purchasing this particular exclusive article we can parade before our less fortunate neighbors and turn them green with envy. A family is rated by the kind of car they possess more often than by the kind of children they rear. And soon the "two car idea" will divide mankind into two groups, they that can and they that can't.

Many of you will recall the article published in the *Christian Century* some months ago which told the story of how a man took it into mind to spread the teaching of Jesus by means of signs which set forth his salient attitudes. He goes to a woman's apparel shop, run by a Christian business man, and asks permission to place a little motto in his window. The proprietor consents without bothering to inquire what is on the sign. Soon people gather in front of his window, smile, and pass on. He goes out to investigate and discovers that his friend has put this sign in his store window:

TAKE NO THOUGHT FOR WHAT YOU SHALL WEAR

In the next shop, a jewelry store, at which he gains similar permission the sign reads:

LAY NOT UP FOR YOURSELVES TREASURE ON EARTH

Needless to say they are taken out of the window at once. The ideals of Jesus must be kept from people if they are to have the right kind of "buying psychology." Boosting sales on Saturday is one thing and boosting Jesus on Sunday is another thing.

How many of us are willing to take the high ground that Fritz Kreisler, the violinist whose music has stirred our souls to their depths, has reached for his own life? He says: "I am constantly endeavoring to reduce my needs to a minimum. I feel morally guilty in ordering a costly meal, for it deprives some one else of a slice of bread, some child, perhaps, of a bottle of milk. My beloved wife feels exactly the same way about these things that I do. You know what I eat; you know what I wear. In all these years of my so-called success in music, we have not built a home for ourselves. Between it and us stand all the homeless in the world." This is not very modern; in fact, it has the ring of a voice in Galilee, A.D. 28.

A church that spends nearly twice as much money for moving pictures as it does for all religious purposes, that spends more for each of the following luxuries—tobacco, cosmetics, soft drinks, chewing gum, candy, and jewelry—than it spends to send the gospel of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth, may well ask itself whether it has a right to continue to call itself Christian in the New Testament sense of that word. If American Protestantism had given even a tithe of its conservatively estimated income last year the increment to the Lord's treasury would have been over one and one quarter billion dollars. We may all well pray the prayer that some one prayed recently in one of our churches, "O God, Christianize Christianity."

Have we ever seriously undertaken to comply with Jesus's program of evangelism?

His method was very simple. One man was to tell another and he another until all men everywhere heard the good news. It would spread like a human prairie fire, one heart kindling another heart. The disciples were sent out as witnesses. All the members of the early church, ordained or unordained, were witnesses of his saving power. The willingness to witness was implicit in the Christian confession. They witnessed in word and deed and testified, oftentimes, in blood. And by this persistent devotion to their calling as evangelists they tremendously affected the whole structure of life in the Roman Empire.

But in these days we have turned over the business of recruiting very largely to two individuals, the evangelist and the pastor. The history and psychology of the revival have been studied from every angle in these days. Surely many of the great victories of the Church have come from the great revivals that have stirred the hearts of multitudes. No one would say for a moment that we have passed beyond the place where we shall ever need the services of the professional evangelist in the extension of the kingdom. Mass evangelism still has its field of service, but certainly it is no longer to be looked to as our main chance. The fact that it is becoming more and more ineffective does not merit the conclusion that we are growing less interested in religion in America. In fact, the opposite may be true. Many of the crudities of the old revival evangelism simply do not register. Faulty but lurid theology and crowd psychology should not be expected to function as spectacularly in this age as they did in a pioneer stage of our social and religious development. Our attention has been directed to the visible results of such high-powered campaigns of evangelism. We have been unable, however, to ferret out and evaluate the sinister effects registered in sensitive souls who have rebelled against the low-grade intellectuality in such appeals, and have sadly concluded that they have committed "the unpardonable sin" because they have refused to be browbeaten into the kingdom by the big stick of fear and ill-concealed motives of personal selfishness. Whatever its undeniable values in this or any other day, we cannot any longer make revival evangelism a main dependence for ingathering into the churches.

Nor is the case much clearer for the pastor-evangelist. Certainly our pulpits should ring with an evangelistic fervor. We should always preach as though we were pleading for a verdict in the will of the listener. But to impose this responsibility upon the preacher as an individual is to enlist one against an army and to trifle with a serious situation. The preachers, as a class, have too often accepted this demand and tacitly concurred in the expectation that they should be the main, if not the exclusive, agency for recruiting in their parish. The pastor is a leader, an inspirer, a creator of atmosphere and ideals. His greatest work is inspiriting with vision and spiritual enthusiasm those who labor with him in the vineyard of the Lord. He should lift his voice in testimony in season and out of season, but he should not be as "one crying in the wilderness."

Will religious education solve the dilemma? In part, to be sure. But to expect our Sunday school teachers to convert the world is asking too much. The whole process should tingle with spiritual values and life challenges, but, even at best, it touches but a fragment of our field for evangelism. No greater indictment of the religious incompetency of the average Christian home can be made than the fact that in almost every instance the parents of these homes depend upon the Sunday school teacher to lead their children to Christ. Religious education is becoming increasingly intelligent and effective in the field of evangelism, but the unshepherded multitudes know not its appeal.

There is but one answer. When the rank and file of the Church take with seriousness Jesus's commission to make disciples of all nations, then there will be some hope of making the world Christian. At present it takes 30 people 365 days to win one new member into the Church. This is the statistical average for American Christianity. Here is evidence of inefficiency and inertia that is appalling.

I have recently become interested in the growing understanding and appreciation of Dwight L. Moody. Henry Drummond declared that Mr. Moody was the greatest man the nineteenth century produced. Gamaliel Bradford quotes one of his biographers as detailing that "in his rage to save souls he traveled more than a million miles, addressed more than a hundred million people, and personally prayed and pleaded with seven hundred and fifty thousand sinners. All in all, it is very probable that he reduced the population of hell by a million souls."[2] The great evangelist never allowed himself to become merely a mass evangelist. He was a tireless and impassioned personal worker. His universal cry was, "Are you a Christian?" and early in his life he established a rule: "I made it a rule that I would not let a day pass without speaking to some one about his soul's salvation; if they did not hear the gospel from the lips of others, there will be

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[2] "D. L. Moody: A Worker in Souls," p. 16.

365 in a year that shall hear the gospel from my lips." Dr. Erdman in his book on Moody rightly appraises the significance of this master worker in souls when he says: "The life of Mr. Moody has no more important message for the present day than is found in his insistence that it is the privilege and duty of every professing Christian to exert definite, personal influence toward bringing others into vital relationship with Christ and into membership in his Church." [3]

What transformations await this old world if men and women who know Christ would only tell the glad tidings of salvation! If, with grave seriousness, and yet with contagious enthusiasm and joy, we should undertake to make Christ known and loved by our friends and neighbors, the kingdoms of this world would soon become the kingdoms of our Lord and Christ. And Jesus envisioned nothing less. He waits for us to obey.

In John Wesley's Journal you will find the following naïve entry: "On Thursday, the 20th, I set out. The next afternoon I stopped a little at Newport Pagnell, and then rode on till I overtook a serious man, with whom I immediately fell into conversation. He presently gave me to know what his opinions were, therefore I said nothing to contradict him. He was quite uneasy to know whether I held the doctrine of the decrees as he did. But I told him over and over we had better keep to practical things, lest we should be angry at one another. And so we did for two miles, till he caught me unawares and dragged me into the dispute before I knew where I was. He then grew warmer and warmer; told me I was rotten at heart, and supposed I was one of John Wesley's followers. I told him, 'No, I am John Wesley himself,' upon which he would gladly have run away outright. *But being the better mounted of the two, I kept close to his side, and endeavored to show him his heart till he came into the street of Northampton."*

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[3] "D. L. Moody: His Message for To-Day."

Superb! Sublime! You can't hold back a Church that will walk with passionate step in the footprints of this tireless knight-errant of the cross.

Finally, has the Church ever taken seriously the prayer of Jesus for unity?

The divisive movement in Christendom began immediately upon his death. The apostles protested against it, but it grew on apace with the centuries, until to-day we are confronted with the spectacle of a divided church that is losing its power because of its endless denominational divisions. In many instances these groups are not only widely different but positively non-communicating. It is a lamentable fact that the delegates to the Conference on Faith and Order at Lausanne could not close their hopeful fellowship with the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. At the very place where his spirit would seem to be uppermost, the barriers were insuperable, and the delegates partook of the sacrament in separate communions. We are arrayed in competitive camps. Separate denominational loyalties make community coöperation possible only within narrow limitations. It is impossible to deliver against entrenched evil the united force of Protestantism. When Christians get together in their warfare against iniquity "devils fear and fly," but the powers of darkness do not tremble before a divided church.

It is not an outward, mechanical unity that is desired or needed. Jesus would have been the last to demand this. He always made room for differing approaches. But there is an inward unity of the Church that is both desirable and scripturally unavoidable. It is the unity that centers around Christ. We can be one in him. We need to turn our attention away from compromises of a creed or conviction and center our thought upon the centrality of Jesus Christ, the one common bond in which we are a spiritual unity. Jesus does not approve of the pettiness and selfishness of much of our denominationalism. As Bishop Brent said in his opening sermon at Lausanne, "He appeals to us to hush our prejudices, to sit lightly to our opinions, to look on the things of others as though they were our very own—all this without slighting the convictions of our hearts or our loyalty to God." When we get the mind that was in Christ we see that "differences were meant by God not to divide, but to enrich."

The finest interpretation of the essential unity of the Church that has ever been given to the world came out of that great Conference in Switzerland to which I have referred. I want to quote those classic words of the report on the Nature of the Church, because this ideal will ever be before us as the goal of Christian unity:

> God who has given us the gospel for the salvation of the world has appointed his Church to witness by life and word to its redeeming power. The Church of the Living God is constituted by his own will, not by the will or consent or beliefs of men whether as individuals or as societies, though he uses the will of men as his instrument. Of this Church Jesus Christ is the head, the Holy Spirit its continuing life.
>
> The Church as the communion of believers in Christ Jesus is, according to the New Testament, the people of the New Covenant; the Body of Christ; and the Temple of God, built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.
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> The Church is God's chosen instrument by which Christ, through the Holy Spirit, reconciles men to God through faith, bringing their wills into subjection to his sovereignty, sanctifying them through the means of grace, and uniting them in love and service to be his witnesses and fellow workers in the extension of his rule on earth until his kingdom come in glory.
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> As there is but one Christ, and one life in him, and one Holy Spirit who guides into all truth, so there is and can be but one Church, holy, catholic, and apostolic.

III

We turn now to a second aspect of this question of the seriousness of Jesus's ideals in modern life. How far can we expect his principles to apply to the friction areas in our modern world? For friction points we surely have, and a deep uneasiness stirs beneath the surface of our social order, threatening at any moment to throw us again into the recurring maelstrom of world revolution. No one except the superficial optimist and the blind provincial is ignorant of the fact that our modern world is nervous and consciously insecure. We have looked to gods who have failed us and we have found no new deities capable of soothing our troubled spirits. Sweep with your eye around the world and note the unrest of English workingmen, the nervous fear clutching at the heart of France, the repressed revolt of Germany's patriots, the red terror of Russia's Communist autocracy, the birth struggle of a new order in China, the fight for economic sustenance in Japan, India's non-violence struggle for independence. And at home in America, have we escaped? Our lawlessness and crime, our feverish gambling on the markets, our disintegrating home life, our imperiled agricultural situation, our inconsistencies of isolation and domination in foreign affairs—these shall answer. All this hair-trigger nervousness throughout our common life simply reveals that everywhere we have lost the secret of power, the possession of an inward unity and poise that gives life meaning and outlet and hope.

Jesus intended us to believe that his gospel was entirely adequate for the social maladies of mankind.

"Ye are the light of the world." Have we dared trust the principles of Jesus in the arena of our acute, unsolved problems of social relationships? Here will be the final stand for the Armageddon of the future. Will the world take Jesus seriously or will it bow down to lesser gods of its own creation? Our destiny is bound up in the answer.

What about our economic life? Is it pagan or Christian? Is it black or white or nondescript gray? Men like Tawney in England and Harry F. Ward in America are frankly telling us that there is no chance for the principles of Jesus so long as the business world is dominated by the profit motive rather than the servive passion. Jesus said, Deal with your fellow man on the family basis, treat one another as brothers. The present economic order has no place for such family morality. It treats men as spoils in a labor market and makes personality subordinate to dividends. Economic determinism has no place for human kindness, brotherliness, and good will. The philosophy which dominates modern industry is hardly out of the jungle, much less on the level of the gospel of Christ. There are many good men in our economic order, but they are confused and bewildered and largely powerless to change the structure of the system in which they work.

The voice of the Church has been timid and unauthoritative. Too often it has feared to offend its substantial supporters and has softened down its prophetic protest to innocuous platitudes. Here is the home mission field of American Protestantism. Shall we dare to lift up our voice in His name in behalf of tired women workers, many of whom are mothers, pale children of the slum and the mill village, bartering their childhood joys for the family budget, despairing men held in the slavery of an ecomonic tyranny that gives them neither adequate wage, steady work, nor protection for old age? Shall we patch up here and there a temporary and local injustice, or shall we sound a battle cry along the whole economic line and protest against a theory that denies Jesus's principles of service and exalts selfishness rather than love? We have been trying to repair the old road of economic competition; we need to survey a new highway that leads not through a moral morass but to a city of brotherly love. We need to take the cross out of the monastery and put it in the market place.

And what of our interracial contacts? Have we learned the alphabet of his mind at this point of friction? Color is only skin deep, we say. But there are few things deeper than skin. It goes down into cultural backgrounds, racial struggles, ethnic ideals. The clash of color has always been one of humanity's most constant and desperate threats.

Jesus blazed the way for us nineteen hundred years ago, but we have been afraid to follow in the footsteps of our Pioneer. He himself is the one catholic Person in whom every race and nation find their perfect Ideal. He taught that God was the Father of all men and all men were brothers. To despise our brother, though he be weak and backward, is the very essence of un-Christlikeness. "Honor all men." This principle of Jesus was fought out in the spread of the gospel to the Gentile world. Here racial pride must give way before the march of the Spirit of God, and the Jewish apostles must learn brotherhood's first and final law, "that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him." I do not know that I have heard this principle more beautifully expressed than in a little story which a friend told me recently. In a home in California there was an old colored man whose business it was to take care of the yard and garden. Among the members of the household was a five-year-old boy, whose chief delight was to follow the old man around and watch him work and listen to his homely talk. One day the negro said to the little boy: "John, how come you like to hang around here with me when the folks go 'way? I'm just an old black man and you a little white boy." The child stood still for a moment and then looked up into the face of the colored man, and said: "Uncle John, it don't make no difference to God and me 'cause you are black." Out of the mouth of a child. "Except ye become like a little child"—

How easy of comprehension this ought to be for us in America, we whose national stock has been enriched by the admixture of many contributing cultures and racial strains. America was meant to be God's experiment in brotherhood. Shall we become simply another battle ground for the age-old conflict of color and creed? The answer rests with the Christian mind of America. Does it believe in the common Fatherhood of God, not as a theological formula, but as a social creed? What has gone on in America in the years since the war reveals how far we are from accepting seriously the implications of Jesus's teaching. I challenge any man, particularly the Christian preachers and laymen regretfully involved, to take the New Testament and find in letter or spirit one justification for these un-American and anti-social organizations that sprang up all over the country. Of course, they are dead. Organized hatred always dies. But the astounding thing is that they could ever have been born in so-called Christian America. Of all the blasphemies committed in the name of a cross surely this is the most tragic. Visualize Jesus marching in the cause of exclusivism, racial antagonism, and "hundred per cent Americanism." The whole disgusting idea reveals how thin is the veil between the children of light and the sons of darkness.

Surely there is a better way. God never meant us to rise to freedom on the backs of men held under by our superior privilege. Weakness and underprivilege challenge the chivalry of the true knight of the cross. His blade is unsheathed against all tyranny of color, all bigotry of creed, all pettiness of nationalism. In that warfare the Son of God has long been enlisted as a Knight-errant of love. In his hand is the sword of the Spirit and in his eyes the vision of a day when bitterness shall be lost in brotherhood and all shall live for each and each for all.

"Dreams are they—but they are God's dreams!
Shall we decry them and scorn them?
That men shall love one another,
That white shall call black man brother,
That greed shall pass from the market place,
That lust shall yield to love for the race,
That man shall meet with God face to face—
Dreams are they all;
But shall we despise them,
God's dreams?"[4]

Will war ever end? Will enduring peace ever come? No child in America has ever grown to be thirty-five years of age without passing through a war. War has been a game of kings and military lords. The common people, mother's sons, the flower of our youth, have been the pawns on the international chessboard. After every struggle we have sighed for peace and prepared for war. Civilization is now at stake. Conflicts are now inevitably international. There can be no neutral nations. We are all bound up in the bundle of a common fear. Are we to go on forever thus, periodically destroying the fruit of our advancing civilization, gilding it over with pious propaganda and glitter of banners and roll of martial drum? Are we ever to learn that the only way out is Jesus's way up? Will we trust love rather than machine guns? Do we dare to be Christians?

The framework of peace is now adequate for a

[4] Thomas Curtis Clark.

warless world. Geneva, Locarno, and Paris stand for our supreme victories in the warfare for international comity and coöperation. The only question confronting us is whether we can put back of these instruments the mobilized Christian conscience of the world. And that question must be answered not by statesmen but by churchmen, not in the Senate chamber but in the Christian pulpit, not by the President of the United States but by every humble and courageous follower of the Prince of Peace. "To your tents, O Israel of God!"

IV

Christianity is either daring or dead. We must take Jesus seriously or not at all. "He that is not for me, is against me." If we refuse to accept the mind of Christ for all life, we find ourselves shut out of putting his mind to work in any field. It is all or none. Jesus deliberately put his principle of love in the midst of life. It made men uncomfortable. It divided father from son, mother from daughter. It brought a sword into life. It was dynamite in human society. It turned the world upside down because it was wrong side up. It overthrew entrenched ecclesiasticisms, it lifted kings from their thrones, it judged the Roman Empire and found it wanting. It united Greek and Roman and barbarian in a unity that transcended racial and national lines. It lifted the pall of despair that rested upon the spirits of men, and set ringing the bells of heaven in the hearts of men and women who had forgotten that there was a God.

Religion is power. It is dynamics. It is moral kinetic energy. It changes the structure of life. It destroys, it builds, it lifts, it redeems. Our generation is power-conscious. They know the language of power. They will listen when Christianity stops trying to define the essence of power and begins to do things with power. Nobody understands electricity, but everybody believes in it because they see it working. Nobody understands religion, the power of God in the human spirit, but everybody will believe in it when they see is actually working out in a new energy of moral purpose, transforming individual and social life and actually building here on earth the City of God among the cities of men.

Nothing short of this vision of a new heaven and a new earth can energize the latent resources of the Church and stir again the daring recklessness of his disciples. The Cross of Jesus Christ is the dynamic center of the world's life. To stand near it is to feel again the surging backwash of human sin, to sense once more the biting cruelty of ingratitude and humanity's deep, dark betrayal of its highest Life. But it is also by beholding that cross that we gather strength. In Love's sacrifice is humanity's hope. If he could risk all, and lose all, and gain all, shall we refuse the way he trod? "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." And we, if we be lifted up, shall draw all men to him. Only a bleeding heart can interpret the gospel of a broken heart. The world waits, wistfully, pathetically, for men to dare the full gospel of Jesus Christ, and thus in our day and everywhere repeat the miracle of the Galilean.

"Passage, immediate passage! The blood burns in my veins!
Away, O soul! Hoist instantly the anchor!
Cut the hawsers—haul out—shake out every sail!
Have we not stood here like trees in the ground long enough?
Have we not grovell'd here long enough, eating and drinking like mere brutes?
Have we not darkened and daz'd ourselves with books long enough?
Sail forth—steer for the deep water only,
Reckless, O soul, exploring, I with thee and thou with me,
For we are bound whither mariner has not yet dared to go,
And we will risk the ship, ourselves and all.
O my brave soul!
O farther, farther sail!
O daring joy, but safe! Are they not all the seas of God?
O farther, farther sail!"[5]

[5] Walt Whitman in "Passage to India."

p. 13
65
726

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